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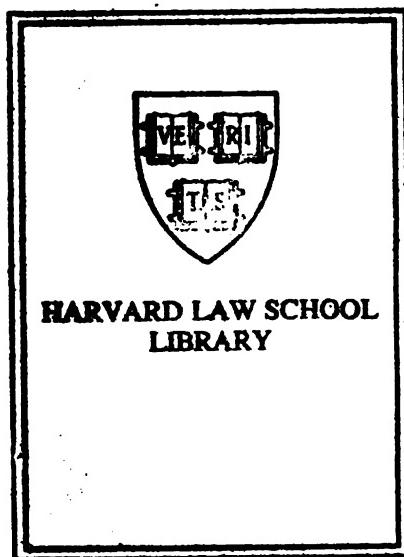
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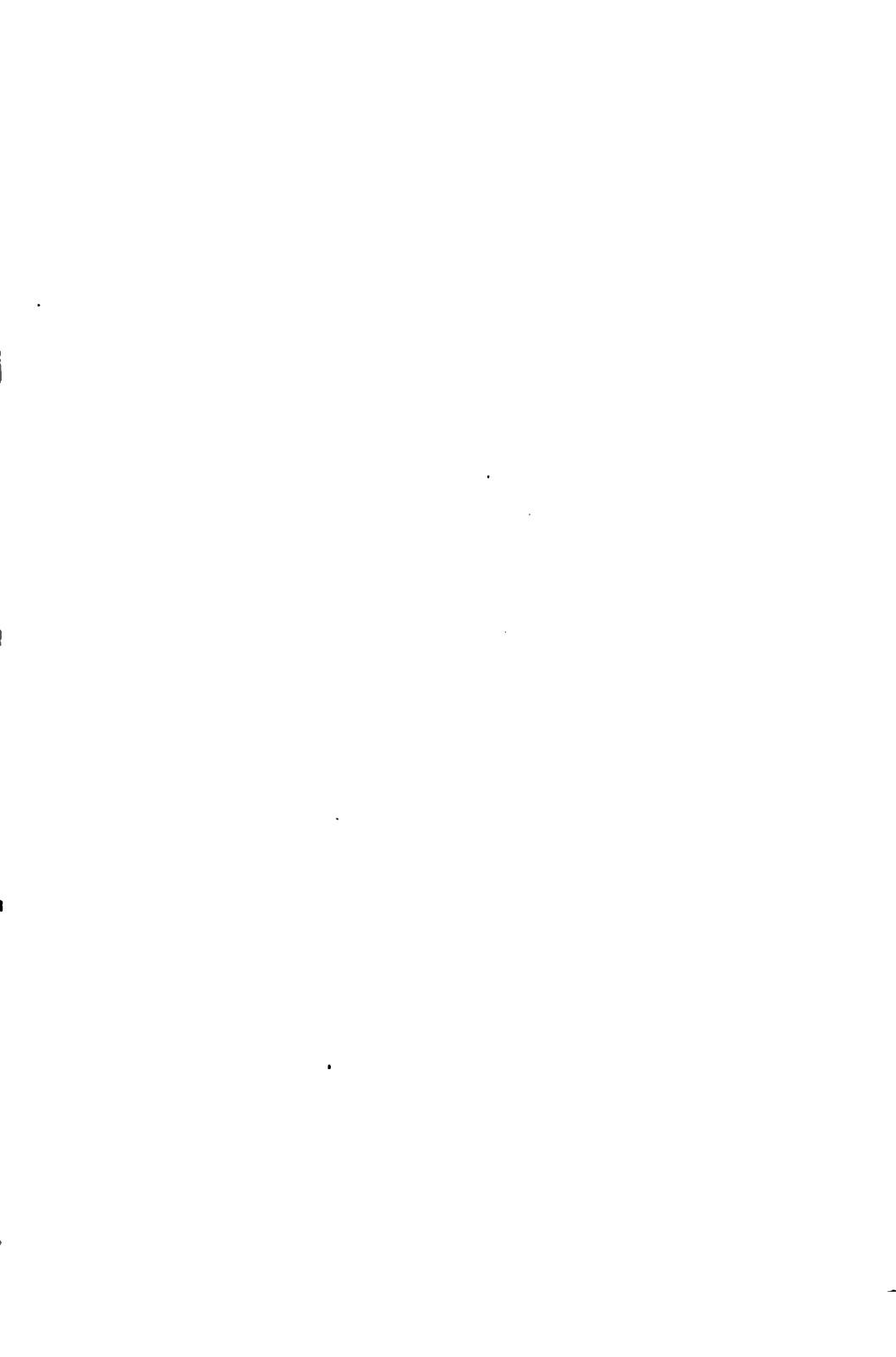
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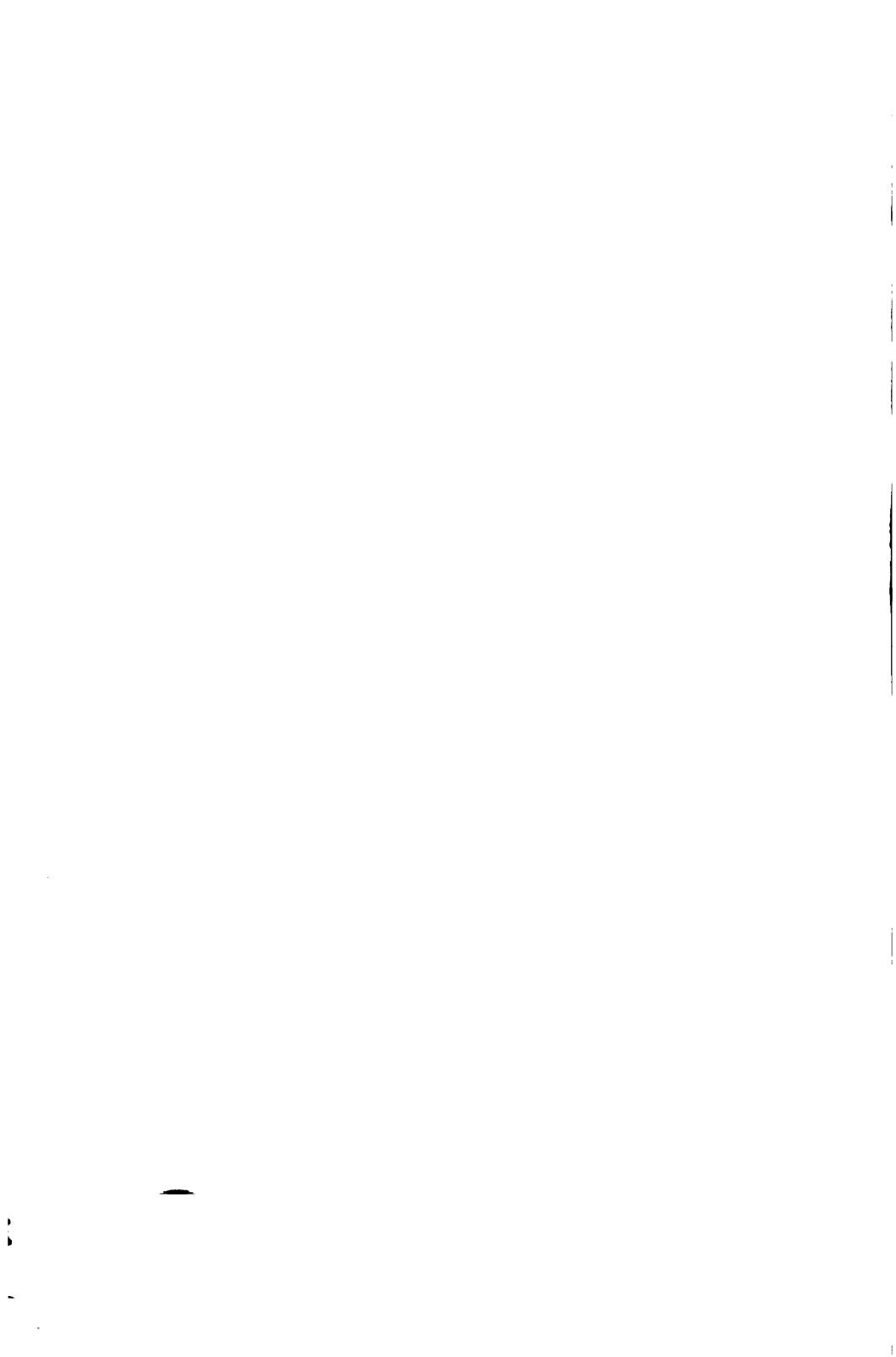
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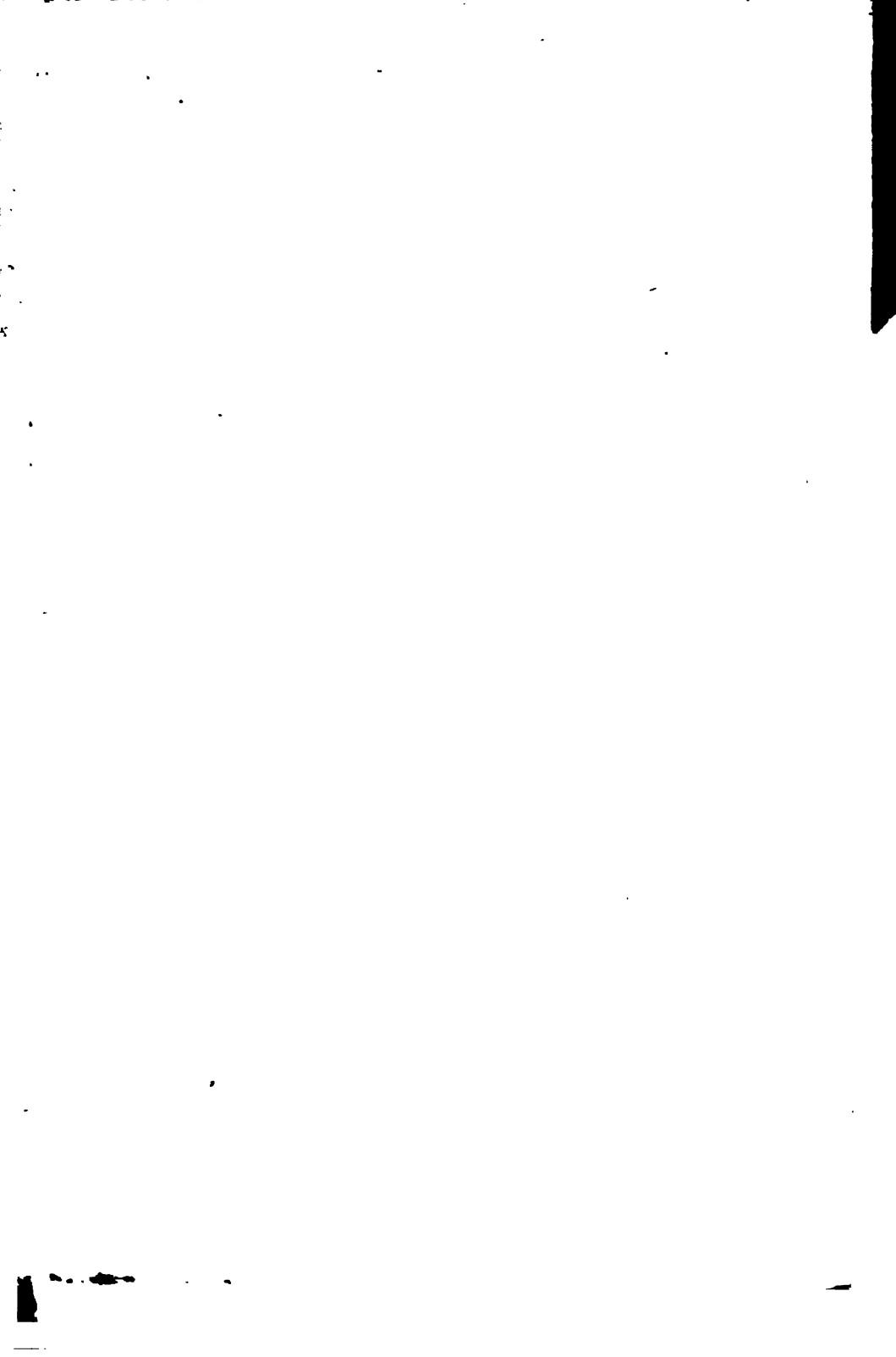
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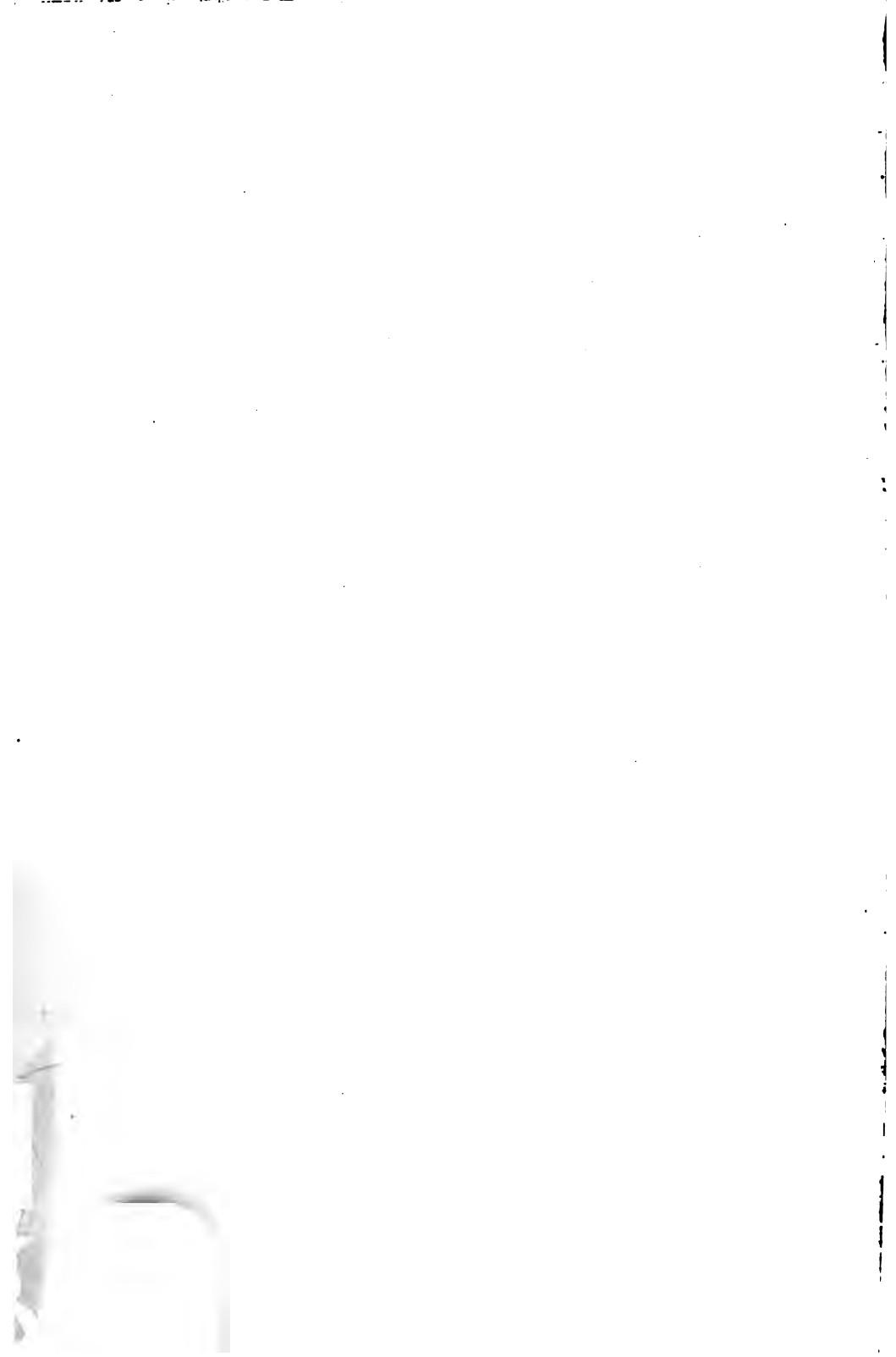
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*July 9*

26

# REPORTS OF CASES

IN THE

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## SUPREME COURT OF NEBRASKA.

JANUARY TERM, 1906.

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VOLUME LXXVI.

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HARRY C. LINDSAY,  
OFFICIAL REPORTER.

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PREPARED AND EDITED BY  
HENRY P. STODDART,  
DEPUTY REPORTER.

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In behalf of the people of Nebraska.

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SEP 21 1908

# SUPREME COURT

DURING THE PERIOD OF THESE REPORTS.

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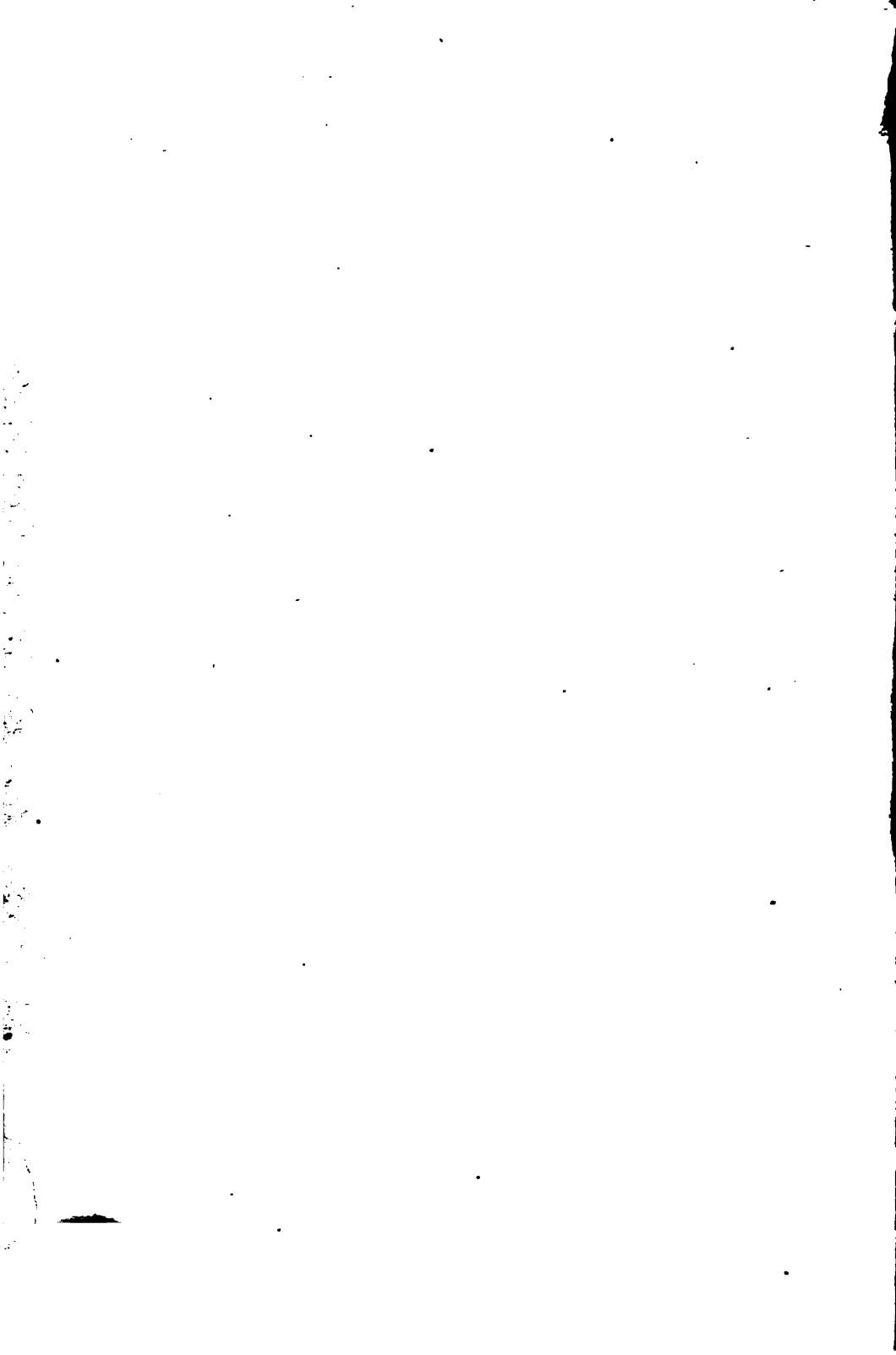
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CASES DETERMINED

IN THE

SUPREME COURT OF NEBRASKA

AT

JANUARY TERM, 1906.

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CITY OF McCOOK V. JAMES MCADAMS.\*

FILED FEBRUARY 22, 1906. No. 14,135.

1. **Municipal Corporations: SURFACE WATER: INJURY TO GOODS: EVIDENCE.** Evidence examined, and *held* sufficient to sustain a finding against the defendant on the question whether the loss in question was occasioned by the act of God.
2. **Evidence which tends to negative that offered by the defendant to establish an affirmative defense is not open to the objection that it is not proper rebuttal, although it may also tend to prove some issue which the plaintiff was required to establish in making his case.**
3. **Evidence examined, and *held* insufficient to warrant the submission of the question of contributory negligence to the jury.**
4. **An instruction covering defendant's theory that the loss was occasioned by the act of God examined, and *held* as favorable to the defendant as the law would warrant.**
5. **Instruction as to the burden of proof examined, and *held* not erroneous.**
6. **Damages.** In an action for damage to merchandise, the original cost of the goods is not a proper basis for the computation of damages. In such case, the measure of damages is the difference between the value of the goods immediately before and immediately after the injury.
7. **—: EVIDENCE.** In order to establish the amount of such dam-

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\*Rehearing allowed. See opinions, pp. 7, 11, *post*.

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City of McCook v. McAdams.

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ages, it is not permissible for a witness to testify to his conclusion as to the amount of damages; he should state the facts within his knowledge, and from those and other facts in evidence it is for the jury to determine the amount of damages sustained.

ERROR to the district court for Red Willow county:  
ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*F. I. Foss, J. R. McCarl, J. S. Le Hew, Boyle & Eldred*  
and *R. D. Brown*, for plaintiff in error.

*W. S. Morlan, contra.*

ALBERT, C.

This is an action for damages caused by surface water flooding the basement of the plaintiff's storeroom as a result, it is alleged, of the defendant's negligent omission to maintain in proper condition a system of drains, ditches and culverts, which it had constructed for the purpose of conducting the surface water through the city. This cause was reviewed by this court on a former occasion. The opinion by Mr. Commissioner OLDHAM, reported in 71 Neb. 789, contains a clear and concise statement of the issues and facts in the case. A second trial in the district court resulted in a verdict for the plaintiff. The defendant brings error.

The first contention of the defendant is that the verdict is not sustained by sufficient evidence. This contention is based, in part, on the proposition that the storm which occasioned the injury complained of was of such unusual severity that the defendant's failure to guard against it cannot be imputed to it for negligence, in other words, that the plaintiff's loss is to be attributed to the act of God, and not to the negligence of the defendant. The evidence shows that on the 17th day of June, 1901, the city of McCook was visited by a severe storm of wind, rain and hail. It lasted about 36 minutes, and, during that time, more than  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches of water fell. But there is evidence

tending to show that storms of that character, and of almost, if not quite, equal severity, are not unusual in that part of the state, and sufficient to warrant a finding that in the construction and maintenance of a system of drainage in the defendant city ordinary care and prudence would require the defendant to take into account the fact that such storms were likely to occur, and to provide against them. In this connection, the defendant complains because a portion of the evidence, tending to establish plaintiff's charge of negligence, was introduced in rebuttal. But it must be kept in mind that one theory of the defense was that plaintiff's loss was occasioned by the act of God. To establish this defense, the defendant undertook to show that the rainfall during the storm was so unusual in quantity that, even had the drainage system been maintained in a reasonable state of efficiency, it would not have prevented the damage to the plaintiff. This was pleaded as an affirmative defense, and one which the defendant undertook to establish by a preponderance of the evidence. Consequently, it was certainly competent for the plaintiff, on rebuttal, to negative that defense, although the evidence offered for that purpose might also tend to prove some issue which the plaintiff was required to establish in making his case. Such seems to be the situation in this case, and, taking into account the nature of the issues and the evidence, and the fact that the defendant made no effort to meet such evidence by further evidence on its part, the complaint now made that it had no opportunity to disprove the facts shown on rebuttal is unfounded.

Two of the instructions given by the court are as follows:

"(4) One defense interposed in this case is that the loss complained of by the plaintiff was occasioned by an act of God. The jury are instructed that by the term "act of God" is meant those events and accidents which proceed from natural causes, and cannot be anticipated and guarded against or resisted, such as unprecedented

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City of McCook v. McAdams.

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storms or freshets, lightning, earthquake, and so forth. For loss occasioned by an act of God a city is not liable, provided its own negligence has not contributed to the damages sustained. On this defense, however, the city assumes the burden of proof to the extent that it must prove by a preponderance of evidence that the storm was of such a violent and unprecedented nature that no ordinary and reasonable amount of care would have prevented the damage. Therefore, if the plaintiff has established by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant was guilty of negligence, then the burden of proof is upon the defendant city to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the storm was of sufficient violence to have caused the damage sustained by plaintiff without the concurrence of such negligence; for if the negligence of the city contributed to plaintiff's damage the city is liable.

"(5) The question for you to determine in this case is simply this: Did the allowing of the drains, ditches, culverts and embankments to become and remain in the condition in which they were at the time of the storm cause or contribute to the plaintiff's damages? If it did not, and the rain-storm was of such violence that the plaintiff would have been damaged to the same extent, even with such drainage in the condition it was in when established and constructed, then your verdict must be for the defendant."

The defendant complains of these instructions, and construes them to mean that, although the plaintiff's negligence proximately contributed to the injury, the defendant would still be liable. We do not think they admit of that construction, in view of the evidence and the theory upon which the case was submitted by the court. The contributory negligence charged is that the plaintiff's store building was situated in a place where large quantities of surface water would naturally accumulate; that it was constructed without proper barriers to guard against surface water, and that the loss complained of was due to such omission, and plaintiff's own negligence. The

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only evidence we find that tends, even remotely, to sustain this charge is that the water at the time of the storm broke down the area wall in front of the store building, flooded the basement, and damaged plaintiff's goods, and the testimony of one witness, who appears to have known nothing of the character of the wall or its condition, who, as an expert, testified as to the character of a wall required under circumstances not shown to be similar to those in which the wall in question was constructed and maintained. Assuming that contributory negligence is charged, the evidence is wholly insufficient to warrant the submission of that issue to the jury. The trial court evidently held that view, because the question of contributory negligence was not submitted, nor do we find, among the numerous instructions tendered by the defendant, any request for the submission of that question. The instructions in question, then, are to be construed in the light of the fact that the element of contributory negligence is eliminated from the case, and, with that fact in mind, it is plain that in these the court was dealing only with the defendant's theory that the loss was occasioned by the act of God. Taken together, and in connection with other instructions defining negligence and the defendant's duty in the premises, the effect of these two instructions was to convey to the jury that, if plaintiff's loss was occasioned by the act of God, the defendant was not liable, unless its negligence, cooperating with the act of God, contributed to the injury and increased the damages. Thus construed, the instructions state the law as favorably to the defendant as the authorities will warrant. *Collier v. Valentine*, 11 Mo. 299, 49 Am. Dec. 81; *New Brunswick S. & C. T. Co. v. Tiers*, 24 N. J. Law, 697, 64 Am. Dec. 404; *Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. Sulphur Springs Independent School District*, 96 Pa. St. 65, 42 Am. Rep. 529.

The defendant complains of another instruction, on the ground that it states that, on certain questions, the burden of proof shifted to the defendant. Ordinarily, it cannot be said with technical accuracy that the burden of proof

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shifts in a case of this nature. But, in the instruction under consideration, the court first instructed the jury that the burden of proof was upon the plaintiff to establish the material allegations of his petition. Then comes that portion of the paragraph of which the defendant complains: "This burden, however, does not remain with the plaintiff upon a question of affirmative defense, and the point at which the burden shifts to the defendant will be later pointed out in these instructions." It is clear that the court did not instruct, and the jury could not have understood, that the burden of proof as to any issue tendered by the petition shifted, but merely that the burden of proof rested upon the defendant to establish its affirmative defense. That the instruction, as thus construed, is a correct statement of the law will be conceded.

But we think the judgment must be reversed, because of the erroneous admission of evidence on the question of damages. In order to establish the amount of damages sustained, the plaintiff and another witness, after having testified that they had made an estimate of the damages to the goods, were asked substantially this question: "What was the amount of damage (to the goods)?" The plaintiff answered, "\$534"; the other witness, "Over \$500." The evidence shows that these estimates were based, in part, at least, on the original cost of the goods as shown by the cost mark. It is quite clear that the original cost of the goods is not a proper basis for the computation of damages, because it not infrequently happens that goods on the shelves of a merchant are actually worth but a fractional part of their original cost. The measure of damages in cases resulting from injury to property is the difference between the value of the property immediately before and immediately after the injury. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Metcalf*, 44 Neb. 848. Besides, it is not permissible for a witness to state the amount of damages sustained. He should state the facts within his knowledge, and from those facts and the other evidence adduced, it is for the jury to determine the amount of damages. *Fre-*

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*mont, E. & M. V. R. Co. v. Marley*, 25 Neb. 138; *Jameson v. Kent*, 42 Neb. 412. The competency of the evidence offered by the plaintiff on the question of damages was challenged by timely and proper objections, and, as the verdict as to the amount of damages rests entirely upon evidence of that character, its admission necessarily constitutes prejudicial error.

Other errors are assigned, but as they are not such as are likely to occur in another trial, it would be profitless to consider them at this time.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed February 8, 1907. *Former judgment of reversal adhered to:*

**Cities: Action for Damages: Instruction.** In an action against a city for damages alleged to have been caused by the negligent omission of the city to maintain in proper condition a system of drainage constructed by it, where one of the defenses relied upon is that the loss was occasioned by the act of God, it is error to instruct the jury that the burden is upon the defendant to establish such defense.

ALBERT, C.

The plaintiff in error recovered a judgment for damages to a stock of goods, which, it is alleged, resulted from the negligent omission of the defendant city to maintain in proper condition a system of drainage which it had constructed for the purpose of carrying off surface water. The city brought error.

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Among other errors assigned was one to the effect that the reception of certain evidence adduced by the plaintiff on the question of damages was incompetent. The evidence was pointed out and its competency challenged in the brief filed on behalf of the city. In the brief subsequently filed by the plaintiff, no attempt was made to show that the evidence was competent, to justify its reception, or to show that its reception, if error, was error without prejudice. The judgment was reversed on the ground that the evidence in question was incompetent. *City of McCook v. McAdams, ante*, p. 1. A motion for rehearing was then filed, and in the brief in support thereof it was contended, among other things, that the cause was submitted on the theory, acquiesced in by both parties, that there was no dispute as to the amount of damages, and that the plaintiff, if entitled to recover at all, was entitled to recover the whole amount claimed. There seems to be some ground for this contention, and if the case rested solely upon that assignment we should hesitate to recommend a reversal of the judgment.

But we think the former judgment should be adhered to on other grounds. In the former opinion we discussed certain instructions relating to the burden of proof, and attempted to dispose of the contention that such instructions were to the effect that the burden of proof shifted during the trial. We are satisfied that the specific contention just mentioned is fairly disposed of in the former opinion, but, upon further consideration, are convinced that in the disposition thereof we impliedly gave effect to a rule of law which has no application to cases of this character, and that is that the burden of proof is upon the defendant to establish the defense that the loss was caused by the act of God. That rule is generally recognized and applied in actions against carriers for the loss of goods. *Black v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, 30 Neb. 197; 1 Jones, Evidence, sec. 180, citing among other cases: *Nelson v. Woodruff*, 1 Black (U. S.), 156; *The Mohler*, 21 Wall. (U. S.) 230; *Levering v. Union Co.*, 42 Mo. 88, 97

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Am. Dec. 320, and note. But its applicability to such cases is due to the peculiar liability of a common carrier. His obligation is to carry and deliver the goods, and rests upon a contract, expressed or implied. Where there is a breach of this obligation, the law, from considerations of public policy, pronounces the carrier legally answerable therefor, unless he can clear himself by bringing the loss within certain exceptions, one of which is the act of God. Schouler, *Bailments and Carriers* (2d. ed.), sec. 405. But an ordinary action in tort for damages caused by some negligent act or omission of the defendant stands on a different footing. In such case, the bare fact that the plaintiff has suffered damages raises no presumption against the defendant. Nor is it sufficient for the plaintiff to show that the defendant was negligent; he must also show that such negligence was the proximate cause of the injury complained of. *Brotherton v. Manhattan Beach I. Co.*, 48 Neb. 563; *City of Omaha v. Bouman*, 52 Neb. 293. In other words, the burden is upon the plaintiff to show that his loss is the proximate result of defendant's negligence. Plaintiff's proof tending to establish that proposition may be met by evidence in direct negation thereof, or by evidence which indirectly negatives the proposition, as, for example, that the loss was caused by a third person, or by the act of God, or some other agency, therefore it was not the proximate result of defendant's negligence. In either case, where the evidence for and against the proposition is equally balanced, or preponderates in favor of the defendant, the plaintiff is not entitled to a verdict. The mere fact that the defendant proceeded indirectly instead of directly to negative the proposition does not shift the burden of proof to its shoulders. Indeed, this court has held that, in an action for damages on the ground of negligence, the burden of proof on the question of negligence does not shift, but remains with the plaintiff throughout the trial. *Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boeschen*, 74 Neb. 764; *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Shepherd*, 74 Neb. 369, 374. These cases, while not

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directly in point, have a strong bearing on the question under consideration. We have been unable to find a case directly in point, as the question has generally arisen in actions against common carriers which, as we have seen, stand on a different footing. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Shaw*, 63 Neb. 380, tends to support the opposite view. That case, like the present, was for damages for surface water, and it was there held that the act of God, when relied on as a defense, must be specially pleaded. But the holding in that case seems to be the result of a failure to distinguish between actions against common carriers, as such, and those grounded entirely on negligence, and seems to be in conflict with the holdings of the New York courts which have repeatedly held that in the latter class of cases it may be shown, under a general denial, that the injury was caused by the negligence of a third person. *Schular v. Hudson River R. Co.*, 38 Barb. (N. Y.) 653; *Schaus v. Manhattan Gas Light Co.*, 14 Abb. Pr., n. s. (N. Y.) 371; *New Haven & Northampton R. Co. v. Quintard*, 6 Abb. Pr., n. s. (N. Y.) 128; *Gilbert v. Sage*, 5 Lans. (N. Y.) 287; *Howell v. Biddlecom*, 62 Barb. (N. Y.) 131; *St. John v. Skinner*, 44 How. Pr. (N. Y.) 198; *Kansas P. R. Co. v. Searle*, 11 Colo. 1. We can see no difference in principle between showing that the loss was caused by a third person and that it was caused by the act of God, or some other agency. After a careful examination of the subject, we are satisfied the rule that the burden of proof is upon the defendant to establish the defense of the act of God is not applicable in cases of this character. It follows therefore that the instructions of the court which we have considered are erroneous.

It is recommended that the former judgment of reversal be adhered to.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the former judgment of reversal is adhered to.

REVERSED.

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The following opinion on second rehearing was filed January 8, 1908. *Former judgment of reversal vacated and judgment of district court affirmed:*

**CITIES: ACTION FOR DAMAGES: INSTRUCTION.** In an action brought against a city by a property owner for damages occasioned by the failure of the city to keep in repair an artificial drainage system constructed by it, whereby surface water, was diverted from its natural flow during a rainstorm and cast upon his premises, the defendant pleaded a general denial, and that the storm was of such unprecedent character as to constitute the act of God. The jury were instructed in substance that, if they found that the defendant was guilty of negligence in failing to keep the drainage system in repair, the burden of proof was, in that event, upon the defendant to establish by a preponderance of the evidence that the storm was of sufficient violence to have caused the damage sustained by the plaintiff without the concurrence of such negligence. *Held,* That such instruction was not erroneous.

LETTON, J.

A full statement of the facts in this case and of the issues involved has been made in former opinions. The court being in doubt as to the correctness of the law as to the burden of proof laid down in the last opinion, a rehearing was granted mainly for the consideration of that question. Upon the other questions involved we are satisfied the case was properly submitted. At the trial the question of the amount of damages was treated as practically conceded, the main contention being whether plaintiff was entitled to recover at all.

The plaintiff bases his right of recovery upon the alleged negligence of the defendant in failing to keep in repair and in proper condition a system of drainage constructed by it, whereby surface water, which would not otherwise have flowed upon his premises, was diverted from its usual course and permitted to flow thereon to his damage. The defendant pleaded a general denial, and also pleaded that the injuries complained of were caused by a storm of such an unprecedent and extraordinary char-

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acter as to constitute in law the act of God. The last opinion held that it was error, in such a state of the issues, to instruct the jury that the burden is upon the defendant to establish the defense of the act of God. It is said in the opinion of Mr. Commissioner ALBERT:

"In other words, the burden is upon the plaintiff to show that his loss is a proximate result of defendant's negligence. \* \* \* Plaintiff's proof tending to establish that proposition may be met by evidence in direct negation thereof, or by evidence which indirectly negatives the proposition, as, for example, that the loss was caused by a third person, or by the act of God, or some other agency; therefore, it was not the proximate result of defendant's negligence. In either case, where the evidence for and against the proposition is equally balanced, or preponderates in favor of the defendant, the plaintiff is not entitled to a verdict. The mere fact that the defendant proceeded indirectly instead of directly to negative the proposition does not shift the burden of proof to its shoulders."

We think these statements hardly applicable to the question before us, for the instruction complained of only cast the burden of proving *vis major* on the defendant after the jury had been convinced by the plaintiff's proof that the defendant had been guilty of negligence to his damage. While the burden is on the plaintiff to show that his loss is the result of the defendant's negligence, when he has established the fact of negligence on the part of the defendant and that his loss occurred directly therefrom, he has met all of the conditions the law imposes upon him in order to recover, before any evidence is produced by the defendant. He is not required to go further, and to anticipate and disprove all defenses which the other party may have pleaded or may introduce evidence to support under a general denial. When the plaintiff has closed his case, the defendant may show that it was not guilty of the negligent act complained of by either direct or indirect proof which negatives the proof offered

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by the plaintiff as to the fact of its negligence or the plaintiff's damage. Further than this, the defendant may plead and offer proof of matters in excuse or justification, as that the injury complained of would have occurred in any event without the concurrence of the defendant's negligence, or that some outside, independent force, of such nature that the defendant in its duty of observing care could not reasonably have anticipated or guarded against, was the proximate cause of the injury. Such defenses, while not technically confession and avoidance, partake of the nature of such defense. While not confessing the cause of action, they seek to avoid its effect by proof of other and new matter which bars the plaintiff's right to recover, and they must be established by the defendant in order to overcome the evidence on the part of the plaintiff, which, unexplained, would establish the defendant's negligence. They are affirmative in their nature and the burden of proving them is upon the person asserting them.

In the former opinion a distinction is sought to be drawn between such defense if pleaded by a common carrier and if offered by another, but we see no reason for the distinction, provided that the person seeking to assert it stands in a similar relation to the person injured. A carrier has undertaken a special duty to carry safely. If he fails to do so a presumption arises against him, which he must explain away. In this case the city had constructed a drainage system which the jury found it had neglected to keep in repair, and that by its negligence the plaintiff apparently was injured. In the one case, the presumption took the place of evidence against the carrier; in the other, the jury found the facts against the city as to neglect to keep up the ditches. The burden then rests alike on the carrier and the city to produce proof to show that its negligence was not the proximate cause of the loss or injury, but that the loss was attributable to an independent cause without the concurrence of its negligence, or, in other words, that, even if it had not been negligent, the injury would have occurred. In this case,

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the city having constructed the artificial drainage system and changed the natural flow of the surface water, the obligation rested upon it to exercise reasonable care to maintain the system so that the water would not be collected and thrown upon the plaintiff's premises to his damage. The plaintiff had a right to rely upon its exercise of proper and reasonable care in that regard. If he was damaged by water breaking from such artificial drainage channel and rushing upon his premises by the negligence of the defendant, and the defendant undertook to explain the occurrence, the burden was upon it to make the explanation, and not upon the plaintiff to negative the excuse in making his case. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Shaw*, 63 Neb. 380; *Fremont, E. & M. V. R. Co. v. Harlin*, 50 Neb. 698; *Olsen v. Webb*, 41 Neb. 147; *Williams v. Evans*, 6 Neb. 216; *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Buel*, p. 420, *post*. The illustration given by Judge Cooley in discussing special duties is instructive: "The case may be instanced of a householder on a prominent street of a city repairing his roof. While thus engaged a slate falls from the roof and injures a person passing along the street below. Here, manifestly, it was the duty of the householder to take such precautions as would reasonably guard against such an injury; all the obligation of special care was upon him, and the passer-by had a right to assume that no work being done over the walk was to subject him to danger. True, the act of God, or some excusable accident may have caused the slate to fall, but the explanation should come from the party charged with the special duty of protection." 2 Cooley, *Torts* (3d ed.), p. 1,422.

This view does not conflict with the doctrines of the cases of *Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boesen*, 74 Neb. 764, or *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Shepherd*, 74 Neb. 369, 374, for the burden of proof as to the existence of negligence still rests upon the plaintiff throughout the trial; neither, we think, does it conflict with the holdings of the New York cases cited in the last opinion, but may be distinguished therefrom. In fact, the case of *New Haven & North-*

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*ampton Co. v. Quintard*, 6 Abb. Pr., n. s. (N. Y.) 128, established the rule in that state that an act of God must be specially pleaded in order to admit proof. This was an action against a common carrier, but, as we have seen, the rule is applicable to all other cases of special duties. The burden was placed upon the plaintiff by the instruction to prove the defendant's negligence of duty and his damage. After he had made his case, in order to escape the logical result of this proof, the defendant was required to show that the loss was inevitable under the circumstances. We think this was proper. After its negligence was established it had the laboring oar. The burden did not rest upon it to disprove negligence, but upon the plaintiff to prove it, but, negligence being proved against it, it did have the burden of showing an independent cause for the injury, by reason of which it was released from liability. Upon the whole case, we find no prejudicial error in the record.

The former judgment of this court is vacated and the judgment of the district court

AFFIRMED.

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#### HENRY C. JORDAN V. ANDREW R. JACKSON.\*

FILED FEBRUARY 22, 1906. No. 14,149.

1. **Review: RECORD.** Affidavits used on the hearing of a motion to set aside a default, if not preserved in the bill of exceptions, will not be considered in this court.
2. **Specific Performance: PLEADING.** Amendment to a cross-petition examined, and *held* not to constitute a departure, and the cross-petition, as thus amended, examined, and *held* sufficient to support a decree for specific performance.
3. ——: FINDINGS. In such case a general finding in favor of the cross-petitioner will sustain a decree for specific performance.
4. **Married Women: CONVEYANCES.** Where a married woman owns

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\*See opinion on motion for rehearing, p. 26, *post*.

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real estate in her own right, except when such real estate is a homestead, in order to convey a good title it is not necessary that her husband should join in the conveyance.

5. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the findings and decree.

ERROR to the district court for Dakota county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*W. E. Gantt*, for plaintiff in error.

*J. C. Mabry and William P. Warner, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

On the 28th day of August, 1902, the plaintiff and the defendant entered into a contract in writing, whereby the defendant agreed to sell and convey to the plaintiff 840 acres of land in this state for \$36,120. The purchase price was to be paid as follows: \$2,500 when the contract was executed, \$2,500 on February 1, 1903, \$5,000 March 1, 1903. The remainder to be evidenced by two notes to be executed March 1, 1903, secured by second mortgage on the land, one for \$16,000, and the other for \$10,120, both payable March 1, 1908. The contract further provides that upon receipt of the cash payments above mentioned and the execution of the notes and mortgage for the deferred payments, the defendant shall execute a warranty deed to the plaintiff. After the contract was prepared and signed, the plaintiff paid the defendant \$1,000 of the \$2,500 cash payment, and the contract was left in a bank in Sioux City. The understanding upon which it was left there is one of the matters in dispute, and will be referred to hereafter. Shortly afterwards the plaintiff expressed himself as dissatisfied with the abstract furnished by the defendant, claiming that the defendant's title appeared to be defective. The defects urged at that time are discussed in the body of the opinion. Afterwards, in the month of September, the plaintiff wrote the defendant notifying

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him of his demand for the return of the \$1,000, and that the abstract did not show good title. Failing to procure a return of the \$1,000, on the 14th day of October, 1902, the plaintiff brought this action.

It is alleged in the petition that on or about the 28th day of August, 1902, the plaintiff and the defendant made an agreement, whereby it was mutually agreed between them that the plaintiff should buy from the defendant, and the defendant should sell to the plaintiff, the lands hereinbefore mentioned, at the price already stated; that after making a verbal agreement and agreeing upon the terms and conditions, it was then further agreed by and between the parties that the agreement should be reduced to writing, signed by the parties and placed in escrow in a certain bank in Sioux City, Iowa, there to remain until the defendant should furnish the plaintiff abstracts of title to the land showing perfect title to the same in the defendant, and that plaintiff was then to have ten days in which to examine the abstracts, and if, upon such examination, they were satisfactory to him that the sale was to be completed in accordance with the terms of the agreement in escrow. A copy of the agreement reduced to writing is set out at length in the petition. It is further alleged that said written agreement was deposited in said bank, and at the same time the plaintiff also deposited in escrow his check for the sum of \$1,000, payable to the defendant, which at said time was by the defendant indorsed to the bank, and that the money thereon has been collected by the bank, and that the funds so collected remain in escrow in place of the check; that on or about the first day of September, 1902, the defendant furnished abstracts to the land, and that on or about the 5th day of the same month the plaintiff notified the defendant that the abstracts were not satisfactory, and that they did not show that the defendant had good and sufficient title to the land; that he then notified the defendant that he would not accept said title or proceed further in carrying out the agreed contract of sale, and demanded of defendant, and of the said

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bank, the return of the said \$1,000 so as aforesaid left in escrow, and the cancelation of the said agreement; that the defendant refused and still refuses to cancel the agreement and have said money returned to the plaintiff. The petition also contains a general allegation that the plaintiff has performed all the conditions of said agreement on his part, but that the defendant has failed as aforesaid to perform his part thereof. The damages are laid at \$1,300. The petition contains a second cause of action, but it need not be noticed at this time.

On the 23d day of February, 1903, the defendant having failed to answer, a default was entered against him, although his attorney at the time appeared and tendered an answer. On the same day the defendant presented a motion to set aside the default. It was supported by affidavits and accompanied by an answer setting up a meritorious defense. The motion was allowed and leave given to answer.

The answer is of unusual and unnecessary length. It admits the execution of the written contract set out in the petition, that it was deposited in a Sioux City bank, but denies specifically that it was placed there in escrow for the reasons and for the purpose alleged by the plaintiff, and avers that it was left there for the reason that the plaintiff was unable at that time to pay more than \$1,000 of the cash payment required by the contract, and required ten days to pay the remaining \$1,500, and that the contract was deposited in said bank with the understanding that it would be delivered to the plaintiff when he had paid the remaining \$1,500, which was to be paid within ten days from the execution of the contract. The answer also denies that the plaintiff deposited his check in said bank in escrow, but alleges that the check was given in part payment of the cash payment mentioned in the contract. It denies that defendant's title to the land was defective, and alleged affirmatively that his title thereto is clear and perfect, with the exception of certain mortgage liens, which the defendant was to pay out of the money re-

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ceived from the plaintiff on the purchase price. The answer contains a general denial of all allegations not admitted or qualified. The answer also contains what is denominated a counterclaim, but it will not be necessary to notice it at this time.

A cross-petition was filed with the answer, which it will be necessary to notice at length. It is as follows:

"Against the plaintiff the defendant alleges: (1) The making of said written contract, a copy of which is set out in the petition, which was entered into by the plaintiff and defendant on the 23d day of August, 1902; the defendant further alleges that he performed all that said contract requires of him up to the present time, and that he will perform all that it required by said contract hereafter, and that on or before March 1, 1903, he will make and tender to the plaintiff a good and sufficient warranty deed to all the property described in said contract, with a clear and perfect title thereto, which is all that can be required of the defendant by the terms of said contract. (2) He further alleges that all that plaintiff had done on his part by way of performance of said contract is the payment to the defendant of the sum of \$1,000 which was paid at the time of signing said contract, that there remains now due and payable on said contract the further sum of \$4,000 which the plaintiff refuses to pay; that he declares his intention not to further perform his part of said contract, and continues to disregard and repudiate its terms; that there will be due upon said contract the further sum of \$5,000 March 1, 1903, and at the time the plaintiff is required by the terms of said contract to execute and deliver to the defendant his two promissory notes, one for \$16,000, with interest at 5 per cent. payable semiannually, and the other for \$10,120, with interest at 5½ per cent. per annum, both due March 1, 1903, and to execute mortgages upon the real estate sold to him to secure the payment of said notes, all of which the plaintiff declares he will refuse to do, and asserts his intention to repudiate said contract. Wherefore, the defendant prays

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the court for a decree against the plaintiff requiring him to specifically perform said contract in all its terms and conditions, and to pay said sums of money now due upon said contract, and to pay the sum of money to become due March 1, 1903, and to execute said notes and mortgages in compliance with the terms of said contract, and he prays the court for such other and further relief against the plaintiff as shall secure the performance of said contract, and, if the plaintiff fails and refuses to perform said contract within 30 days from the signing of the decree requiring him so to do, that then the court shall render judgment against the plaintiff for the full amount unpaid upon said contract, to wit, \$35,120, together with interest at 7 per cent. thereon, and costs of suit."

The reply is a general denial. Afterwards the defendant filed the following amendment to his cross-petition: "Comes now the defendant and, leave of court being first obtained, files the following amendment to his answer and counterclaim: (1) He alleges that on March 1, 1903, and at all times he was, and has been, and is now ready and willing in all particulars to perform said contract on his part, but alleges that he did not on March 1, 1903, or at any other time, make and tender to the plaintiff a deed as provided in said contract, for the reason that prior to that time the plaintiff repudiated his said contract and refused to perform its terms or make any further payments on the purchase price of said land as required by the terms of said contract, and the defendant avers that he was able, willing and ready on said 1st day of March, 1903, to make a clear and perfect title to the plaintiff for all of said land, and to make and deliver to the plaintiff a good and sufficient warranty deed therefor, and would have done so, except for the plaintiff's persistent refusal to perform said contract on his part and his avowed purpose to repudiate the same. The defendant alleges that he is still willing and ready to perform his contract, and convey to plaintiff a clear and perfect title to all of said real estate, as soon as the plaintiff makes the payments

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of the purchase price as required by the terms of said contract. Wherefore, in addition to the prayer of his original and cross-petition, the defendant prays the court for the additional relief, if the plaintiff fails to specifically perform his said contract within a time fixed by the court's decree, then the defendant be given judgment against the plaintiff for the full amount of the balance due on the purchase price of said land, and that all plaintiff's rights, title and interest in said lands, and all his equities therein, be foreclosed and forever barred, and that such judgment be established as a lien upon said land as in proceedings to foreclose a mortgage, and that special execution issue for the sale of all the plaintiff's rights, interests and equities in all said real estate, for the satisfaction of such judgment, interest and costs, so far as the same will extend, and that he have judgment for any deficiency, and general execution to satisfy any unpaid balance that remains due after the sale of said property, and for all other orders and relief as justice and equity require in the premises."

A trial was had to the court without a jury which resulted in a finding for the defendant and a decree for specific performance. The plaintiff brings the case here on error.

The first assignment of error is that the court erred in setting aside the default. The motion to set aside the default was accompanied by an answer setting up a meritorious defense, and appears to have been supported by affidavits. The affidavits are not preserved by bill of exceptions, and for that reason cannot be considered at this time. This is a rule that is reiterated at almost every sitting of the court. *Mercantile Trust Co. v. O'Hanlon*, 58 Neb. 482; *Reid, Murdock & Co. v. Panska*, 56 Neb. 195, and cases cited. Every presumption is in favor of the correctness of the order of the district court, and, in the absence of evidence showing that its discretion was abused, the presumption that it was properly exercised in this instance will prevail. The plaintiff, however, insists that it was in-

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cumbent upon the defendant to preserve the evidence on this motion. We know of no rule of practice that requires a party to preserve the evidence for the use of his adversary.

The next contention of the plaintiff is that the court erred in permitting the defendant to file an amended petition. This contention is based on two grounds: (1) That the facts set out in the amendment existed at the time the original answer was filed; (2) that the amendment presents another and different cause of action than that set up in the original cross-petition. The first objection could be urged against almost any amendment offered to a pleading, because, ordinarily, an amended as distinguished from a supplemental pleading is based on facts which existed when the original pleading was filed. Consequently, to sustain that objection would be, practically, to deny the right to amend. As to the second, it cannot be fairly said that the amendment presents another and different cause of action than that set up in the original answer and cross-petition, because the identity of the cause is clearly preserved and the relief asked is substantially the same. It is possible that it did present issues which would have to be supported, and which the plaintiff would have to meet, by different testimony than that required by the issues tendered in the original cross-petition, and it is possible that the plaintiff would have been entitled to a continuance on that ground, had he asked it, but it does not seem that he applied for a continuance, at least he does not complain of a refusal of a request for a continuance. There seems to be no merit in the contention that the court erred in permitting the amendment.

The decree is next assailed on the ground that it is not supported by the cross-petition and the amendment thereto. We have set out the pleadings in substance and we are satisfied that they are amply sufficient to sustain the decree. In this connection we might notice another assignment of error, which is based on the denial of a motion made by the plaintiff to strike certain portions of the prayer to plaintiff's amendment to the cross-petition. The prayer

is no part of the pleading, tenders no issue, and neither adds to nor takes from the evidence required of either party. We are unable to perceive how the denial of this motion could in any way prejudice the plaintiff.

Another assignment, argued at some length, is that the decree is not supported by the findings, in that the court did not find that the defendant had performed his part of the contract, or any fact that would excuse such performance. The answer to this is that at the close of specific findings in favor of the defendant is a general finding in favor of the defendant which, if it stood alone, is sufficiently broad to support a decree in his favor.

A further contention of the plaintiff is that the findings of the court necessary to support the decree are not sustained by sufficient evidence. He insists that it is established by the evidence that after the contract was drawn up and signed it was left in the bank at Sioux City, with the understanding that it was not to become effective until the defendant had procured abstracts showing clear title to the property in question, and satisfactory to the plaintiff. The testimony of the plaintiff is to that effect, but he is flatly contradicted by the defendant. The defendant's version of the transaction is that after the contract was made and signed it was found that the plaintiff was unable to pay the full amount of the first payment, the receipt of which was acknowledged in the contract, but could only pay \$1,000, and asked a week or ten days to pay the remaining \$1,500. This was agreed to, whereupon the plaintiff paid \$1,000, and his copy of the contract was left in the bank at Sioux City, with instructions to the effect that upon the payment of the remaining \$1,500 it was to be delivered to him. The objection to delivering it to him at the time being that on its face it showed the receipt by the defendant of the full amount of the first payment. The defendant's story is corroborated by the cashier of the bank, as well as by many facts and circumstances appearing in evidence, and we think the evidence upon this branch of the case clearly preponderates in his favor.

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But the plaintiff contends that the evidence shows that the title which the defendant proposed to convey was defective, and, consequently, a decree for specific performance in favor of the defendant is inequitable and erroneous. We are unable to concur in this view. The defects upon which the plaintiff relies in support of this contention are: (1) An omission in a deed forming part of the chain of title to state whether the grantor therein, a woman, was married or single; (2) another deed forming a link in the chain of title purports to have been given by certain parties described in the deed as widow and only heirs of one in whose name the title stood of record at the date of the conveyance; (3) a mortgage lien on the land, or a part of it, for \$8,500 in favor of Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company; (4) a trust deed to secure the payment of \$400 annually to defendant's mother during her lifetime, constituting a lien on the land. As to the first it appears to be frivolous. We are unable to see how it is material, on the question of the title to this land, whether she was married or single when she executed the deed. It is not claimed that any portion of it constituted a family homestead. If she were single, and otherwise competent, there can be no question as to her right to convey. If married, she could convey in the same manner and with like effect as if she were single. Comp. St. 1905, ch. 73, sec. 42. Her husband's contingent right as tenant by courtesy stands on a different footing than that of the wife's inchoate right of dower. The surviving wife takes dower in all lands whereof the husband was seized at any time during the marriage, unless lawfully barred (Comp. St. 1905, ch. 23, sec. 1), whereas the husband's right of courtesy extends only to lands whereof his wife was seized in her own right at the time of her death. In other words, while the wife, if a resident of the state, must join the husband in a conveyance, or execute a separate conveyance, in order to cut off her right of dower; by her own conveyance and without the concurrence of her husband she may convey good title to the lands owned by her, unless the property be a homestead.

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As to the second defect, it is not claimed that the grantors named in the deed did not stand in the relation there stated to the party who had died seized of the land, but merely that it does not thus appear on the paper title. So far as the abstract itself is concerned, it shows how the grantors were described in the deed, by recital which would be of as much weight, at least, as the recital omitted from the other deed, namely, whether the grantor was married or unmarried, upon which plaintiff places so much stress. Aside from the recital in the deed, two affidavits were produced from parties having knowledge of the facts which show that one of the grantors was the surviving wife of said decedent, that he had died intestate, and that the other grantors are his only children, save a posthumous child, which died when less than two years old. The proof by affidavit is of the character usually required to cure such defects, and we think was amply sufficient to satisfy any reasonable person.

As to the two mortgages, it sufficiently appears that the plaintiff was apprised of them when the negotiations leading up to the contract were in progress, and that it was understood between the parties that the one to defendant's mother should be released on or before March 1, 1903, and the other paid off and discharged out of the payments then and previously made by the plaintiff on the purchase price of the land. The first was in fact released in September, 1902, about two weeks from the date of the contract. As to the other mortgage, as it was to be satisfied out of the payments which the plaintiff was to make, so long as he is in default on such payments he is in no position to complain that it has not been satisfied, especially so long as the balance which would still remain unpaid on the purchase price is largely in excess of the lien of the mortgage.

The abstract furnished is in evidence; it was passed upon and approved by plaintiff's attorney, except as to the mortgage of the insurance company, and, subject to that exception, which as we have seen is not available to the

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plaintiff at this time, shows a good and merchantable title in the defendant. The objections to it appear to be captious, and, judging from the entire record, seem to have been raised rather because the plaintiff desired to escape from the contract than because of any fear that the title he had agreed to purchase was not good.

Many assignments are based on the reception of evidence which the plaintiff insists was incompetent. But it is well settled that the reception of incompetent evidence, in a trial to a court without a jury, is not reversible error, when there is sufficient competent evidence to sustain the findings. Little, if any, incompetent evidence was received in this case, and the competent evidence is ample to sustain the findings and decree. For these reasons, it is unnecessary to go into this assignment with greater particularity.

It is recommended that the decree of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on motion for rehearing was filed June 8, 1906. *Former judgment vacated and judgment of district court reversed. Motion for rehearing overruled:*

JACKSON, C.

For the first time our attention is called to the fact that the defendant has at all times retained possession of the land covered by the contract, which he now seeks to have specifically enforced. It is now insisted that an account should have been taken of the rents and profits, and the amount credited to the plaintiff on the payments required to be made by him. By the terms of the contract and the

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decree the deferred payments draw interest, and it would seem to be inequitable that the defendant should be allowed interest and at the same time enjoy the rents and profits of the real estate. *Craig v. Greenwood*, 24 Neb. 557. It does not appear, however, that this matter was brought to the attention of the trial court, nor has counsel pointed out any basis in the record for a computation of the rents and profits. But as the decree itself is in form defective, in that it provides only for performance on the part of the plaintiff and not on the part of the defendant, we think the ends of justice would be served by vacating the decree of the district court and remanding the cause, with directions to permit the plaintiff to file a supplemental bill for an account of rents and profits and to deduct the amount thereof from the payments required of the plaintiff, and to enter a decree for specific performance on the part of both the plaintiff and the defendant.

It is therefore recommended that the former judgment of this court and the decree of the district court be vacated, and the cause remanded, with directions to permit the plaintiff to file a supplemental bill for an account of the rents and profits to be credited on the payment to be made by the plaintiff, and to enter a decree accordingly for specific performance on the part of both the plaintiff and the defendant.

**By the Court:** For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the former judgment of this court and the decree of the district court are vacated, and the cause remanded, with directions to permit the plaintiff to file a supplemental bill for an account of the rents and profits to be credited on the payment to be made by the plaintiff, and to enter a decree accordingly for specific performance on the part of both the plaintiff and the defendant, and the motion for rehearing is overruled.

**JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.**

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In re Estate of Scott.

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IN RE ESTATE OF CALISTA E. SCOTT.  
SARAH M. BROWN ET AL. V. MATILDA E. HARMON.\*

FILED FEBRUARY 22, 1906. No. 14,146.

1. **Administrators: APPOINTMENT: APPEAL.** The administrator of an estate is an officer of the court, and in making the appointment the court is required to exercise a reasonable discretion. Upon appeal to the district court from an order appointing an administrator, the issue presented by the appeal is one for the court, and should not be submitted to a jury.
2. **Letters of administration** should ordinarily be granted to the widow or next of kin where the application for such appointment is timely, but where the next of kin are unable to agree upon an administrator, and in the exercise of its discretion the probate court appoints some one other than the next of kin, the appointment should not be disturbed on appeal, unless it appears that there has been an abuse of such discretion.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county:  
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Berge, Morning & Ledwith*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Stewart & Munger*, contra.

JACKSON, C.

Calista E. Scott died intestate in Lancaster county April 30, 1904. Her heirs were Sarah M. Brown, Matilda E. Harmon and Lucinda Kemble, daughters, A. L. Scott, a son, and W. L. Scott, a grandson. A. L. Scott was a resident of Thayer county. Sarah M. Brown, Lucinda Kemble and A. L. Scott joined in a petition to the county court of Lancaster county, requesting the appointment of A. L. Scott as administrator of the estate of their parent. Matilda E. Harmon filed a counter petition, objecting to the appointment of Scott for the sole reason that he was a nonresident of Lancaster county, and re-

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\*Rehearing denied. See opinion, p. 30, *post*.

*In re Estate of Scott.*

quested the appointment of Henry Harkson. After hearing, Harkson was appointed upon a finding that he was a more suitable person and competent to act as such administrator. An appeal was taken to the district court, where the appointment of Harkson was confirmed, and Scott and his sisters, Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Kemble, prosecute error.

In the district court Matilda E. Harmon moved that the case be placed on the docket for the trial of cases without a jury. This motion was sustained. The record discloses that the order of the court was that the case be transferred to the equity docket. Plaintiffs in error demanded a jury trial, which was denied.

Two questions are presented by the petition in error: First, the absolute right of Scott upon the record to be appointed administrator of his mother's estate; and, second, the denial of a jury trial in the district court. There is considerable force in the contention of plaintiffs in error that the county court should have appointed Scott administrator of his mother's estate. The application was timely, and his qualifications were not put in question. The county judge seems to have acted entirely upon the assumption that it would best conserve the interests of the estate to appoint a resident of Lancaster county. That condition alone ought not to deprive the next of kin of the right to administer the estate of their ancestor. There is, however, a degree of discretion vested in the county court in the appointment of administrators, and we find no such abuse of discretion as would justify a reversal in the case at bar.

Coming to the question of a right to a jury trial, our view is that the trial court adopted the proper procedure. The case of *Sheedy v. Sheedy*, 36 Neb. 373, which it is urged supports the demand of the plaintiffs in error for a jury, in our judgment is not in point. On principle the questions involved in the appointment of an administrator are easily distinguished from those arising out of an allowance to the widow. It is true that this proceeding is

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In re Estate of Scott.

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not equitable, but the question of the qualifications of a person to administer upon an estate is purely a question for the court. An administrator is an officer of the court. The appointment is one resting in sound discretion, and it would be anomalous to hold that such discretion must be controlled by the verdict of a jury.

We find no reversible error in the record, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on motion for rehearing was filed June 8, 1906. *Motion overruled:*

**Administrators: APPOINTMENT: DISCRETION.** When the next of kin disagree as to the selection of an administrator, and the court appoints one requested by one of the next of kin, it will not be presumed upon appeal, in the absence of any evidence upon that point in the record, that the court has abused its discretion in making the appointment.

SEDGWICK, C. J.

In the brief upon the motion for rehearing it is insisted that the statement in the opinion that there is "a degree of discretion vested in the county court in the appointment of administrators" is not applicable to this case. It is undoubtedly true, as stated by the supreme court of Wisconsin in *Welsh v. Manwaring*, 120 Wis. 377, that the right of administration is not inherent, but statutory. The statute is mandatory, and must be followed by the probate court. Our statute provides that: "Administration of the estate of a person dying intestate shall be granted to some one or more of the persons hereinafter mentioned, and they shall be respectively entitled to the same in the following order: *First*, the widow, or next of kin, or both,

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as the judge of probate may think proper, or such person as the widow or next of kin may request to have appointed, if suitable and competent to discharge the trust." Comp. St. 1905, ch. 23, sec. 178. Where the preference of appointment is given by the statute to two or more persons, or classes of persons, in the alternative the probate court has a discretion in the matter. 18 Cyc. p. 83. In this case there are four persons equally entitled to preference in the appointment of an administrator. These persons did not agree, and the statute provides that the probate court may appoint one of these four persons, *or such person as they may request to have appointed*. One of the four persons entitled to preference requested the appointment of the person appointed by the court. In such case, where there is a disagreement among the parties entitled to name the administrator, and the appointment is of one chosen by some of these parties, we think that the presumption ought to obtain, in the absence of any proof to the contrary, that the court in making the appointment has properly exercised its discretion.

The motion for rehearing is

OVERRULED.

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**FARMERS & MERCHANTS INSURANCE COMPANY V. SARAH R. BODGE.\***

FILED FEBRUARY 22, 1906. No. 14,151.

**Insurance Policy: BREACH: WAIVER.** A policy of tornado insurance, containing a provision that if the buildings insured be or become vacant or unoccupied the policy shall be null and void, does not become absolutely void upon a violation of such condition, unless the insurer chooses to take advantage of the forfeiture; and where, after loss under such a policy, the company issuing the same, being informed of the loss as well as the breach of condition, cancels the policy and retains the premium up to and including the time of the loss, it will be held to be a waiver of the breach of condition.

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\*Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 35, *post*.

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Farmers & Merchants Ins. Co. v. Dodge.

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ERROR to the district court for Buffalo county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Halleck F. Rose*, for plaintiff in error.

*E. C. & H. V. Calkins, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

Plaintiff in error issued an insurance policy to the defendant in error, providing for indemnity in case of loss occasioned by winds, cyclones or tornadoes. The policy contained these stipulations:

"It is agreed that if the assured shall have, or hereafter accept, any other insurance on the above mentioned property, whether valid or not, or if the above mentioned buildings be or become vacant or unoccupied, or be used for any other purpose than that mentioned in said application, without consent indorsed hereon, \* \* \* in each and every one of the above cases, this policy shall be null and void. Nor will this company be liable for any cyclone, tornado, or windstorm loss or damage on buildings in course of erection unless fully inclosed, nor for buildings or their contents, except said buildings rest on good and substantial foundations, securely inclosed so as not to admit of an unnecessary current of wind circulating through or under them, nor for buildings or their contents covered, in whole or in part, with hay, straw, thatched or board roof, nor for the blowing down of defective chimneys, loose clapboards, shingles or window blinds."

The form of the policy admits of its use for either fire and lightning, or tornado insurance, or both. The buildings insured by the policy were at the time the policy was issued occupied by a tenant, who afterwards vacated the premises, and while they were vacant one of the buildings was damaged by a windstorm, and thereupon the assured made proof and submitted to the company a proposition

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for arbitration, according to one of the provisions of the policy. Upon receipt of the proof the company sent the following communication to the assured:

"Lincoln, Neb., April 19, 1904. Sarah R. Bodge, Kearney, Nebraska. Dear Madam: We received a notice from S. S. St. John of a claim purporting to have been made by you on property covered by policy No. 101,634, having been alleged to have been occasioned by wind. We sent a representative of this company to investigate the matter, and upon arriving he found the place vacated, no one living in the house, barn or on the premises, and from inquiry from the neighbors he learned that no one had been living there since last February. You are aware that such vacancy is in direct violation of the conditions of your policy, and no company without special permission ever intends to cover such a risk. In addition, our representative ascertained that the property was in poor condition and in most places uninsurable. Repairs had long been needed, but nothing seems to have been attended to. We are inclosing you a draft for \$6.35, which is the unearned part of the premium on your policies, \$3.10, \$3.25, and desire to cancel same immediately. Upon receipt of this, kindly forward the policy, and oblige, Yours truly, L. P. Funkhouser, Secretary. Cancelation of policies, 101,634, 3.10; 99,630, 3.25."

Action was instituted on the policy, resulting in a judgment favorable to the assured, from which the company prosecutes error.

It is sought to sustain the judgment of the trial court on three grounds: First, because the provision in the policy avoiding the insurance in the event the buildings were or should become vacant applies only to insurance against fire, and was not, within the contemplation of the parties, intended to apply to tornado insurance; second, if it was intended to apply to tornado insurance, that it is immaterial, because the vacation of the buildings does not increase the hazard as a tornado risk; and, third, if it was, within the contemplation of the parties, intended to apply to tornado insurance and is material, that it was waived

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when the company, upon the cancelation of the policy, retained the premium up to and including the time of the loss. If the defendant in error is correct as to the latter contention then it becomes unnecessary to examine the former. In *Home Fire Ins. Co. v. Kuhlman*, 58 Neb. 488, it was held that a fire insurance policy, providing that it should be void if the buildings be or become vacant or unoccupied, does not upon a violation of such condition become absolutely void, unless the insurer chooses to take advantage of the forfeiture; and where an insurance company, after loss and upon being informed of a breach of a condition in its policy providing for forfeiture, canceled the policy but retained the premium beyond the date of breach of the condition and up to and including the date of the loss, such action on the part of the company amounted to an estoppel and should be held to be a waiver of the breach of condition. The total amount of insurance provided by the policy in suit is \$500; the total premium paid was \$5; the policy was dated May 17, 1902, and would expire by its terms May, 17, 1907. It appears from the evidence that prior to the loss now in litigation the assured had sustained a loss upon which payment had been made by the insurance company. The only evidence on that branch of the case is the testimony of one witness, as follows: "Q. Do you know whether or not Mrs. Bodge received for another windstorm loss under this policy \$25? A. Well, I ain't sure it was exactly \$25, it was pretty near that, I think. Q. Do you remember about when that was paid? A. I should think it was 15 months ago, something like that. Q. It was a windstorm loss paid on this same identical policy? A. Yes, I think it applied— Q. On the house? A. On the granary, might have been partly on the granary and partly on the barn. It wasn't much over \$20, I don't think, of course, I couldn't remember the exact amount." The company had earned the full premium on any amount of loss paid under the provisions of the policy, and the policy would be in force for the balance of the term only upon the difference between the amount so

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paid and the face of the policy. If the amount of loss paid by the company was \$20, then the policy was in force for \$480; if the amount paid was \$25, then the policy was continued in force for \$475. The amount of unearned premium returned was \$3.10. On April 19, 1904, the date when the premium was so returned, computing the loss previously paid by the company at \$20, it had earned of the premium paid by the insured \$1.89, leaving the amount of unearned premium \$3.11. The loss now in litigation occurred on the 8th day of April, 1904. The trial court doubtless found that the amount of premium retained by the company was sufficient to carry the policy beyond the date of the loss, and such finding is not without support in the evidence, although the amount of prior loss paid exceeded the sum of \$20, and applying the rule of *Home Fire Ins. Co. v. Kuhlman*, *supra*, we find that the retention of such premium under the circumstances amounted to a waiver of the breach of the conditions of the policy, and we recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed February 8, 1907. *Former judgment of affirmance vacated and judgment of district court reversed:*

1. **Insurance Contract: CONSTRUCTION.** A stipulation in a contract for tornado, cyclone and windstorm insurance that the policy shall be void in case the buildings insured become vacant is material to the hazard and will be enforced.
2. ——: **WAIVER.** The cancellation of a policy of insurance after loss and notice of facts occurring before loss constituting a forfeiture, coupled with the return of unearned premium from date of forfeiture, does not constitute a waiver of the forfeiture.

JACKSON, C.

A former opinion in this case is reported, *ante*, p. 31. Our conclusion was there put upon the ground that the

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insurance company had waived a forfeiture of the policy by an attempted cancelation after notice of loss, and retaining the premium up to and including the time of loss. A rehearing has been allowed and we find from further consideration that, owing to a mistaken method of calculating the unearned premium, we were in error in holding that the insurance company retained the premium to cover the period of the loss. The case must therefore stand upon the other questions presented on behalf of the plaintiff in error. It appears that after notice of loss the company sent a representative to make an investigation, and after receiving his report wrote the assured the following letter:

"Lincoln, Neb., April 19, 1904. Sarah R. Bodge, Kearney, Nebraska. Dear Madam: We received a notice from S. S. St. John of a claim purporting to have been made by you on property covered by policy No. 101,634, having been alleged to have been occasioned by wind. We sent a representative of this company to investigate the matter, and upon arriving he found the place vacated, no one living in the house, barn or on the premises, and from inquiry from the neighbors he learned that no one had been living there since last February. You are aware that such vacancy is in direct violation of the conditions of your policy, and no company without special permission ever intends to cover such a risk. In addition, our representative ascertained that the property was in poor condition and in most places uninsurable. Repairs had long been needed, but nothing seems to have been attended to. We are inclosing you a draft for \$6.35, which is the unearned part of the premium on your policies, \$3.10, \$3.25, and desire to cancel same immediately. Upon receipt of this kindly forward the policy, and oblige, Yours truly,

"L. P. Funkhouser, Secretary.

"Cancelation of policies 101,634, 3.10; 99,630, 325."

It is insisted on behalf of the defendant in error that this letter amounts to a waiver of the forfeiture provisions of the policy, and we are cited to the case of *Home Fire*

*Ins. Co. v. Kuhlman*, 58 Neb. 488, in support of this contention. Some of the language employed in the opinion would seem to sustain the position of the defendant in error, but a careful reading of the entire opinion has convinced us that the decision was grounded upon the fact that the insurance company in that case, after notice of loss, undertook to cancel the policy, and in so doing retained the premium up to a time after the loss occurred, a state of facts altogether different from those here presented. The contract involved covers loss by cyclones, tornadoes and windstorms; the policy is written on what is termed a combination form that might be used either for fire and lightning, or cyclone, tornado and windstorm insurance, or for all. The stipulations of the policy, in so far as they are important to the determination of the case, are as follows:

"And it is agreed that if the assured shall have, or hereafter accept, any other insurance on the above mentioned property, whether valid or not, or if the above mentioned buildings be or become vacant or unoccupied, or be used for any other purpose than that mentioned in said application, without consent indorsed hereon, or if the property be or shall hereafter become mortgaged or incumbered, or if the same be or hereafter become involved in litigation, or upon the commencement of foreclosure proceedings, or in case any change shall take place in the title, possession, or interest of the assured in the above mentioned property, or if this policy shall be assigned, or if the risk be increased in any manner, except by the erection of additions and repairs to dwelling and of ordinary out-buildings, without consent indorsed hereon, then, in each and every one of the above cases, this policy shall be null and void. Nor will this company be liable for any cyclone, tornado, or windstorm loss or damage on buildings in course of erection except fully inclosed, nor for buildings or their contents, except said buildings rest on good and substantial foundations, securely inclosed so as not to admit of an unnecessary current of wind circulating through or under them, nor for buildings or their contents covered,

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in whole or in part, with hay, straw, thatched or board roof, nor for the blowing down of defective chimneys, loose clap-boards, shingles, or window blinds."

It will be observed that some of these provisions are general and others limited in their application, and it is argued on behalf of the defendant in error that only such provisions as are limited to cyclone, tornado and wind-storm insurance apply to that class of insurance. We cannot, however, so construe the contract. It is plain that the special provisions quoted as applicable to tornado, cyclone and windstorm insurance were intended as additional conditions to those that are general in terms. We do not wish to be understood as saying that a disregard of any one of the general provisions would work a forfeiture of windstorm or cyclone insurance, but we should give effect to those stipulations which are material to the risk. At the time the policy in suit was issued the buildings covered by the insurance were occupied by a tenant; they later became vacant and were vacant at the time of the loss. The question as to whether the vacancy of the buildings increased the hazard is the vital question in the case, and we think it did. In *Sexton v. Hawkeye Ins. Co.*, 69 Ia. 99, and *Republic County M. F. Ins. Co. v. Johnson*, 69 Kan. 146, 76 Pac. 419, the identical question was involved, and in each case it was held that the stipulation against vacancy was material. They are both well-reasoned cases and we are satisfied that the conclusion reached is correct.

The plaintiff had judgment, from which the insurance company prosecuted error. Giving effect to the stipulation against vacancy contained in the contract, the judgment was erroneous, and we recommend that our former opinion be vacated, the judgment of the district court reversed and the cause remanded.

DUFFIE, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing

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Locke v. Skow.

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opinion, the former judgment in this cause is vacated, the judgment of the district court reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

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JOSEPH L. LOCKE ET AL. V. JAMES J. SKOW.

FILED FEBRUARY 22, 1906. No. 14,162.

1. **Bonds: Consideration: Estoppel.** One who executes a bond under circumstances that would estop him to assert its invalidity for want of consideration cannot, in an action upon the bond, avoid liability on the ground that the plaintiff is estopped to assert that there was any consideration for the bond. *United States Fidelity & Guaranty Co. v. Ettenheimer*, 70 Neb. 147.
2. ——: **Petition: Sufficiency.** In an action for the breach of the conditions of a bond, one of which was that the defendant would satisfy the judgment, if judgment be rendered against him on appeal, the petition is not open to demurrer because it does not show the rendition of a judgment which could be paid, where it does show the breach of another condition actionable independently of the liability to satisfy or perform the judgment.

ERROR to the district court for Gage county: WILLIAM H. KELLIGAR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*S. D. Killen, J. E. Cobbe and G. M. Johnston*, for plaintiffs in error.

*E. O. Kretsinger and Sackett & Spafford, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

James J. Skow sued Joseph L. Locke in county court for the unlawful possession of real estate and had judgment for the restitution thereof on March 20, 1900. Locke caused to be executed, filed and approved in the county court a bond for the purpose of perfecting an appeal to the district court. The bond, after reciting the judgment, contained these conditions: "Now, therefore, we \* \* \* do promise and undertake to the said James J. Skow that

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said defendant shall prosecute said appeal to effect, and without unnecessary delay, and that said defendant, if judgment be adjudged against him on the appeal, will satisfy such judgment and costs, and pay a reasonable rent for the use and occupation of the premises aforesaid to the said plaintiff." The plaintiff assailed the bond as being insufficient in law, but his objections were overruled, and a transcript of the proceedings had in the county court was filed in the district court within the time allowed for perfecting an appeal. Locke remained in possession of the premises until the 11th day of December, 1900, when the district court, on motion of the plaintiff, dismissed the appeal for want of jurisdiction, this court having in the meantime held that the statute authorizing an appeal to the district court in actions for the forcible detention of real estate was unconstitutional, and that the district court acquired no jurisdiction in such cases by appeal. No proceedings having been taken to reverse or modify the judgment of dismissal, the action of the district court became final, and the defendant in error thereupon instituted an action in the district court against Locke and his sureties on the bond. The material allegations of the petition contained a recital of the judgment in the county court; the execution and approval of the appeal bond; the judgment of dismissal by the district court; that Locke had sole and exclusive use, possession and occupation of the premises, and obtained the rents and profits therefor by reason of the execution and approval of the bond from its execution until the 11th day of December, 1900; that the reasonable price and value of such use and occupation during the period was \$280; that the defendant had failed, neglected and refused to pay the reasonable rent for such use and occupation, and the costs of the proceedings; that no part of the same had been paid, except the sum of \$150 to apply on the costs; that there was due and unpaid costs amounting to \$23.50; and the plaintiff prayed judgment for \$303.50, with interest. Issues were joined, and a trial to the court and a jury

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resulted in a verdict and judgment favorable to the plaintiff. Locke and his sureties prosecute error.

Four questions are discussed and urged as a reason why the judgment of the district court should be reversed: First, that the petition does not state a cause of action; second, the alleged bond is not a statutory bond; third, it contains none of the elements of a common law bond, that there was no mutuality, and that by the action of the defendant in error it was prevented from becoming effective in securing a trial on appeal; and, fourth, that the sureties are not liable because the consideration which influenced them to sign failed, that is, the alleged bond did not procure for Locke a trial *de novo*.

It is said that the petition is insufficient because it does not appear from the allegations that a judgment was rendered in the district court that could be satisfied by payment, and the case of *German Nat. Bank v. Beatrice Rapid Transit & Power Co.*, 69 Neb. 115, is cited in support of that contention. A comparison, however, of the bond in that case with the one now under consideration discloses a marked difference in the language and conditions of the two bonds. The condition of the bond in the case cited being: "Now, if the said Beatrice Rapid Transit & Power Company shall prosecute this appeal with effect, and without unnecessary delay, and shall pay whatever judgment may be rendered by the court upon dismissal or trial of said appeal, then the above obligation to be void, otherwise to remain in full force and effect." And it was held that because the petition did not show a judgment rendered in the appellate court requiring payment, the petition did not state a cause of action; while in the case at bar the bond contained a provision that, in case judgment was rendered against the defendant, the principal and his sureties would pay a reasonable rent for the use and occupation of the premises to the plaintiff. From the nature of the action such a promise furnished the principal consideration for permitting the defendant to remain in possession of the premises, and had the case been tried

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in the district court *de novo* and judgment there entered for the plaintiff, as in the court below, it is obvious that the liability of the sureties would have been something beyond that of a compliance with the judgment in the district court; there would still be a liability for the use and occupation of the premises. The promise to pay rent was a separate promise and was supported by a distinct consideration. The petition recited that by reason of the undertaking the said Locke remained in the possession of the premises and enjoyed the rents and profits therefrom; that the value of such use and occupation was the sum of \$280, no part of which had been paid. It disclosed the final determination of the action, in which the bond was given, adversely to the principal in the bond.

There is some claim that the petition is insufficient because it does not show a delivery of the bond and an acceptance on the part of the obligee. The question of delivery is purely one of intention. Did the obligors intend the instrument to become operative as a bond? To hold that they did not would be to discredit the evidence furnished by their own acts in procuring the same to be approved. That the bond was accepted, and the course of the obligee influenced and controlled thereby, is conclusively shown by the fact that he refrained from asserting his right to the possession of the premises involved in the litigation until the dismissal of the appeal in the district court. The contention that the petition does not state a cause of action cannot be sustained.

The remaining questions may be disposed of together. It is not important that the bond is not a statutory bond, because the obligation would be good at common law unless the plaintiff in error is estopped from maintaining an action thereon, and it is seriously urged that he is so estopped by reason of the fact that the appeal to the district court was dismissed on his own motion. In *United States Fidelity & Guaranty Co. v. Ettenheimer*, 70 Neb. 147, it was held that "one who executes a bond under circumstances that would estop him to assert its invalidity

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for want of consideration cannot, in an action upon the bond, avoid liability on the ground that plaintiff is estopped to assert that there was any consideration for the bond." In principle that case cannot be distinguished from the one at bar, although that case proceeded to the supreme court before its dismissal. The present chief justice, speaking for the court in that case, said:

"If the defendant obtained no other benefit of his attempted appeal, he, at least, was enabled to present the question to this court, and in the meantime retained the possession of the premises in dispute. The object of the undertaking was to protect the plaintiff against two sources of possible injury: (1) he would be subjected to expenses in the district court, which would be unnecessary if the judgment already rendered should finally stand as the law of the case; (2) he would, while the proceedings were pending, be deprived of the possession of the premises which had been awarded to him by the judgment of the justice."

The order dismissing the appeal in the forcible detention proceedings was a judgment within the meaning of the bond, and we hold that there was both a consideration for the bond and a breach of the conditions thereof; that the judgment of the district court was right, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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**JOHN P. O'NEIL ET AL. V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,441.

1. **Intoxicating Liquors: UNLAWFUL SALE: EVIDENCE.** Where in a prosecution for a violation of the provisions of section 20, ch. 50, Comp. St. 1905, entitled "Liquors," intoxicating liquor is found and seized in the possession of the accused, or is shown to have been in his possession and kept by him at his place of business, by other competent evidence, the statutes make such possession, when not satisfactorily explained, presumptive evidence of guilt, and such possession and keeping may be sufficient to sustain a conviction. *Peterson v. State*, 63 Neb. 251.
2. ——: ——: ——. It is not every kind of possession of intoxicating liquor, however, that raises the presumption that it was kept for an unlawful purpose; and when the evidence on the part of the prosecution shows that the liquor in question was not kept by the accused, and that his possession of or connection with it was of such a nature that he could not have sold or disposed of it unlawfully, and that such liquor, when seized, was not in his possession, but was rightfully in the possession of another, such evidence alone will not sustain a conviction.

ERROR to the district court for Boone county: JAMES N. PAUL, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*James A. Armstrong and Critchfield & Reid*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson*, contra.

BARNES, J.

John P. O'Neil and Burch A. Baldwin were tried in the district court for Boone county on an information charging them jointly with a violation of the provisions of section 20, ch. 50, Comp. St. 1905, in manner as follows: "That the defendants, John P. O'Neil and Burch A. Baldwin, on the 28th day of June, 1904, in the county of Boone, and state of Nebraska, then and there being, did then and there, in the city of Albion, in said county and

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state, keep and have in their possession, in a certain coal shed, then and there located upon the Union Pacific railroad right of way in said city, county and state, certain vinous and intoxicating liquors, to wit, two barrels of wine, with the unlawful intent of them, the said John P. O'Neil and Burch A. Baldwin, of unlawfully disposing and selling the same without having first obtained a license or a druggist's permit therefor." The trial resulted in a conviction, and they were each sentenced to pay a fine of \$200, together with the costs of the prosecution, and to stand committed to the jail of Boone county until said fine and costs were paid. To reverse said judgment they bring the case here by petition in error, and will hereafter be called the plaintiffs.

Among the numerous errors assigned, it is contended by the plaintiffs that the trial court erred in overruling their motions to direct the jury to return a verdict of not guilty in their favor, and in refusing to so instruct the jury, because the evidence was insufficient to sustain a conviction. All of the testimony is before us in the form of a bill of exceptions, and it discloses the following undisputed state of facts: The plaintiffs were copartners as retail druggists, and their place of business was situated on Fourth street, in the city of Albion, in said county. On the evening of the 27th day of June, 1904, there came to the depot of the Northwestern Railway Company, in said city, two barrels of wine, consigned to the plaintiffs, upon which the charges of the common carrier for transportation were unpaid. The agent of the company delivered the consignment in question to a drayman, doing business in that city, together with a statement of the charges thereon, with instructions to deliver the liquor to the plaintiffs on the payment of the said charges. It appears that the plaintiffs had theretofore rented a bin in a coal shed, situated upon the Union Pacific Railroad Company's right of way, and were using the same as a sort of warehouse; that the drayman to whom the agent of the railroad company delivered the liquor had a key

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to this so-called warehouse; that at the general direction of one of the plaintiffs he placed the liquor therein and on the following morning called upon the plaintiffs, presented the expense bill, informed them that he had placed the wine in the warehouse, and demanded payment thereof. They objected to the expense account, and refused to accept the consignment. As soon thereafter as the drayman could conveniently do so, he informed the agent of the railroad company of the situation, and was directed by him, as was his duty, to return the liquor to the depot. He thereupon went to the so-called warehouse or coal bin, loaded the barrels of wine in question upon his dray, drove to the depot, and turned them over to the railway company. Shortly afterwards the wine in question was seized by the officer charged with the arrest of the plaintiffs upon a complaint which was the basis of the information above quoted.

The evidence shows, without question, that it was the custom of the agent of the railway company to entrust all consignments of freight to the aforesaid drayman for delivery to the consignees, with instructions, in case the expense bills and charges for transportation thereof were not paid, to return the goods to the railway company by 10 o'clock on the following day. It was not shown that plaintiffs ordered the consignment of liquor from any one, or that they had paid anything therefor. The only possession of the wine they ever had was, at most, a mere joint constructive possession thereof with the drayman during the time it was in the warehouse or coal bin. It was subject, all of the time, to the control of the drayman, with power on his part to return it to the railroad company in case the charges thereon were not paid.

The state contends that the provision of the statute which makes the possession of intoxicating liquors presumptive evidence of the violation of section 20 of the act in question, and subjects the person so found in possession thereof to the fine prescribed in section 11 of

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the act, unless, after examination, he shall satisfactorily account for and explain the possession of such liquor, and that it was not kept for an unlawful purpose, when applied to the evidence in this case, requires us to sustain the judgment of the trial court. In support of this contention, the attorney general cites the case of *Holt v. State*, 62 Neb. 134. An examination of that case discloses that a traveling salesman of a South Omaha liquor house took an order from defendant Holt, in Grand Island, for a gallon of whiskey, collected the price thereof, and agreed to ship the same to him at said last named place; that he transmitted the order to his house, where the whiskey was put up in a suitable package and delivered to the railroad company, addressed and consigned to Holt, as per the agreement, with all charges for transportation prepaid. When the liquor arrived in Grand Island, a complaint was filed against the salesman, charging him with having sold the liquor to Holt in that city without a license or permit. A trial resulted in a conviction. The case was brought to this court by petition in error, where the judgment was reversed, it being held that the sale was made in South Omaha by the wholesale liquor house, and not by its traveling salesman in Grand Island.

In the case at bar, there is no testimony showing a sale of the wine in question, and it appears that the carrying charges against the same were not paid, so that the railroad company was entitled to the possession of it, until its carrier's lien for such charges was satisfied. It never waived its lien, and if it ever relinquished possession of the goods, which is a matter of doubt, it at once regained the same. *Peterson v. State*, 64 Neb. 875, and *Peterson v. State*, 63 Neb. 251, are also cited by the state, and it is contended by the attorney general that, under the rule announced in those cases, the conviction herein should be sustained. In one of them the evidence showed beyond question that intoxicating liquors were kept by the defendant in his place of business, so that the presumption contended for by the state obtained; while in the

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other the possession of the liquor and the sale of it was admitted, and it was sought to justify the same or defend against the charge on the ground that the seller was the agent of a social club, and sold the liquor to members of the club only. So the authorities cited are of no assistance to us in this case.

In the case at bar it must be conceded that whatever possession the plaintiffs may have had of the wine in question, it was not such a possession as could be designated a keeping of it; or, in other words, they cannot be said to have kept it either at their place of business or elsewhere; while the facts in evidence show they could not have sold, or otherwise disposed of it, and could have formed no purpose of so doing either in a lawful or unlawful manner. No search warrant was ever issued in this case, and no intoxicating liquor was found in the plaintiffs' possession. The evidence shows that, when the liquor in question was seized, it was not in their possession, but in the possession of the railroad company. No evidence was offered or received showing or tending to show that the plaintiffs had any other intoxicating liquor in their possession at or about the time charged in the information, or that they ever were engaged in the sale thereof. The state's evidence satisfactorily explained whatever possession the plaintiffs had of the consignment of liquor in question and was sufficient to rebut the presumption invoked by the prosecution.

The district court therefore erred in overruling the plaintiffs' motions, and in refusing to instruct the jury to render a verdict in their favor of not guilty. This conclusion renders it unnecessary for us to discuss, examine or determine any of the other assignments of error, and, for the foregoing reason, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

**PAUL KLAWITTER V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.****FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,464.**

1. **Rape: EVIDENCE.** The rule is settled in this state that in cases of rape unless the testimony of the prosecutrix is corroborated on material points, where the accused testifies as a witness on his own behalf and denies the charge, her testimony alone is not sufficient to warrant a conviction. *Mathews v. State*, 19 Neb. 330.
2. **Evidence examined, and held not sufficient to sustain the verdict of conviction.**

**ERROR to the district court for Pierce county: JOHN F. BOYD, JUDGE. *Reversed.***

**A. R. Olson**, for plaintiff in error.

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson, contra.*

**LETTON, J.**

The plaintiff in error was convicted of rape on a female child with her consent. To reverse this judgment he prosecutes error to this court. The principal error relied upon is that the verdict is not supported by sufficient evidence.

The prosecutrix is a girl who was at the time of the alleged offense between 14 and 15 years of age. She testifies that she first saw the defendant about the 1st of September, 1904; that about the 11th of September she was staying at the home of a Mr. Gutch in Pierce county; that two acts of sexual intercourse took place between her and the defendant with her consent, one while she was working for Mr. Gutch, and one a short time afterwards when she was at home and the defendant came there with a buggy and took her with him to a point near a Mr. Melchers. Her story as to the second time is contradictory and inconsistent as to the place where she met the

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defendant, and the whole of the circumstances as narrated by her seem somewhat improbable, yet if she had been corroborated by other credible testimony we should be constrained to support the verdict. The rule is settled in this state that in cases of rape unless the testimony of the prosecutrix is corroborated on material points, where the accused testifies as a witness on his own behalf and denies the charge, her testimony alone is not sufficient to warrant a conviction. *Mathews v. State*, 19 Neb. 330; *Oleson v. State*, 11 Neb. 276; *Fisk v. State*, 9 Neb. 62. But this rule is qualified by the other principle that it is not essential that she be corroborated by the testimony of other witnesses as to the particular act constituting the offense. It is sufficient if she be corroborated as to material facts and circumstances which tend to support her testimony and from which, together with her testimony as to the principal fact, the inference of guilt may be drawn. *Fager v. State*, 22 Neb. 332; *Hammond v. State*, 39 Neb. 252; *Dunn v. State*, 58 Neb. 807.

The offense charged is a serious one and the defendant, if guilty, merits the severe punishment inflicted, but, on the other hand, it would be a denial of the defendant's constitutional rights if he were committed to the penitentiary for a term of years without a fair trial, and unless his rights thereto had been properly preserved. The evidence of the prosecutrix is contradictory and somewhat improbable in itself. It certainly seems strange that this girl should go with a man almost a total stranger to her and submit herself to him upon his mere invitation. There is an entire lack of circumstances corroborative of the principal fact, and with the exception of the testimony of Dr. Myers there are no other circumstances proved which can in anywise be said to corroborate the testimony of the prosecuting witness as to matter of probative value. It is urged by the state that the testimony of her brother, a boy of 11 years, is corroborative of the prosecutrix, but his testimony is that the defendant came to their home with a buggy, and his sister went

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with him, and he saw them come back again, while the girl herself on cross-examination describes specifically and with detail that on this occasion she and her sister went to Melchers, and found the defendant there, and that she went with him from that place and did not go from home. She testifies that when they came home from Melchers two of her brothers saw and talked with the defendant, that when she went to Melchers her sister left her with defendant and went home alone, that after the second act of intercourse she told Mrs. Gutch about it, yet none of these persons were called as witnesses to corroborate her statements. If this evidence was within reach it should have been produced. The defendant is directly corroborated by the witness Melcher as to his whereabouts at the times charged. Further, this witness says that defendant had a team but no buggy at his place. No effort was made to prove that the defendant or Melcher ever owned a buggy or that there was a buggy used by defendant at or about that time. It is true that Dr. Myers testified that it was his opinion from what the girl's mother said, and from his examination of the parts on October 13, that the prosecutrix had had sexual intercourse, but this was a month afterwards and might be true and yet the defendant be innocent. Whether innocent or guilty he was entitled to have sufficient corroborative proof of the story of the prosecutrix so that a jury, not influenced by the prejudice which usually prevails in cases of this nature, should be convinced beyond a reasonable doubt of his guilt. Viewing the evidence as a whole, we are satisfied that it is not sufficient to sustain the verdict of conviction. Upon a new trial the state will have an opportunity to produce further corroborative evidence if the story of the prosecutrix be true.

But few objections were made by defendant's counsel to the introduction of evidence and few exceptions taken. No instructions were requested by the defendant, and the jury were not told that the evidence of the prosecutrix required corroboration. The defendant has not assigned

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for review any errors of law committed at the trial and hence we cannot consider any of these matters, but deem it proper to say that cautionary instructions should have been requested.

The judgment of the district court is reversed and a new trial ordered.

REVERSED.

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JENS SILLASEN ET AL., APPELLANTS, V. WILLIAM H. WINTERER, APPELLEE.

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 13,791.

**Continuing Trespass: INJUNCTION.** Concerning simple acts of trespass equity has, in most cases, no jurisdiction, but, if the nature and frequency of trespasses are such as to prevent or threaten the substantial enjoyment of the rights of possession and property in land, an injunction will be granted.

APPEAL from the district court for Keith county: HANSON M. GRIMES, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

*Wilcox & Halligan*, for appellants.

*Beeler & Muldoon* and *H. E. Goodall*, contra.

AMES, C.

There is no dispute of fact in this case. Appellants are the owners of a contiguous body of land in Keith county around which, in 1903, they plowed a strip in intended compliance with, and for the purpose of securing the protection of, section 8, art. III, ch. 2, Comp. St. 1905, commonly known as the "Herd Law," which reads as follows: "That cultivated lands, within the meaning of this act, shall include all forest trees, fruit trees, and hedge-rows planted on said lands, also all lands surrounded by a plowed strip, not less than one rod in width, which strip shall be plowed at least once a year." The strip

was not quite continuous, but there were some breaks or gaps in it which were filled or occupied by fences of the legal standard, so that the incompleteness of the strip was fully supplied within the intent and meaning of the statute. There is some controversy whether the entire width of the strip was plowed upon the lands of appellants or whether it encroached to some extent upon lands of third and, as to this controversy, disinterested parties. We do not think the question is material. The object of the statute is not to promote cultivation of the soil, but to provide a substitute for a fenced inclosure which will suffice to notify the public that the land inclosed is privately owned and exclusively possessed.

For some years prior to this time appellants and appellee had occupied this and other lands belonging to the government, and to individuals, in common for grazing purposes, but when the inclosure above described had been made appellants notified appellee of the fact and required him to restrain his cattle from further trespass upon their land. Appellee not only expressly refused compliance with this request, but practically and continually disregarded it by permitting his cattle, to the number of 150 head or more, to trespass daily upon the inclosed lands, and confessed an intention to continue so doing indefinitely. There are no contract obligations involved in the suit. Appellants sought relief in the lower court by injunction, which was denied them apparently on the ground that they had an adequate remedy by an action at law for damages, and appellee was permitted to show by witness the annual rental value of the lands for grazing purposes. Such a procedure would amount in practice to compelling appellants to lease their land indefinitely for such annual compensation as a jury should see fit to award them and would be equivalent to taking private property, not for public, but for private use. We think that such is not only a principle that the courts will not sanction, but that it is one the practical application of which equity will prevent by injunction. It is, of course,

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not intended to hold, nor does the plaintiff contend, that occasional acts of trespass, voluntary or involuntary, that are committed by a solvent person and that are susceptible of compensation by damages recoverable in a common law action, will be restrained by injunction, but such are as far as possible from the nature of the injuries complained of in this action. These were voluntary trespasses. It does not matter in such a case as this, in which an attempt is openly made wrongfully to appropriate the use and occupation in whole or in part of the plaintiff's land, whether the trespasser is solvent or insolvent. A landowner may deny himself a fortune, if he chooses so to do, to insure that his premises shall be put to only such uses as he desires, or that they may remain vacant or unoccupied. Concerning simple acts of trespass equity has, in most cases, no jurisdiction, but the rule is firmly established in this state and elsewhere that, where the nature and frequency of trespasses are such as to prevent or threaten the substantial enjoyment of the rights of possession and property in land, an injunction will be granted. *Lynch v. Egan*, 67 Neb. 541; *Pohlman v. Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church*, 60 Neb. 364; *Peterson v. Hopewell*, 55 Neb. 670; *Shaffer v. Stull*, 32 Neb. 94; 4 Pomeroy, *Equity Jurisprudence* (3d ed.), sec. 1,357. Appellants might, indeed, have brought successive actions for damages from day to day as acts of trespass occurred, but damages in such cases would have been extremely difficult to measure, and doubtless would not have been as great as the expense of recovery, and the same would have been true of procedure by distraint of the animals damage feasant, if, indeed, the latter would have been at all practicable. The only practical remedy they would have had at law would have been to submit to the trespasses until the end of the grazing season, and then sue for the value of the use and occupation. But such a course instead of protecting their rightful and lawful possession, which is guaranteed to them by the constitution and laws of the land, presupposes a practical abandonment and loss of it.

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We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to grant an injunction in conformity with the prayer of the petition.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to grant an injunction in conformity with the prayer of the petition.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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**REEVES & COMPANY v. EDWARD CURLEE.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,147.

Evidence examined, and held insufficient to support the verdict.

ERROR to the district court for Red Willow county:  
ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

W. S. Morlan and W. E. Stewart, for plaintiff in error.

C. E. Eldred, Hall, Woods & Pound, and Starr & Reeder,  
*contra.*

AMES, C.

This is a proceeding in error to reverse a judgment for the plaintiff in the district court in an action to recover commissions as a sales agent. The defendant corporation is a dealer in traction engines, and had constituted the plaintiff its agent, at the village of Bartley and vicinity, by a written contract containing the following clause: "The party of the first part reserves the right to sell to any party in the above mentioned territory who

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may come to their shop to buy, or send their orders direct to them, or any of their general agents; but when such parties have been solicited by the said second party, then such agency may, on a satisfactory presentation of the claim, have such commission as the agency in making the sale will entitle him or them to." Pursuant to this contract the plaintiff sold at Bartley, to Ginter Brothers, a second-hand engine which was incapable of doing the work required of it because of defective flues, for which sale he was paid commission for his service. The defendant, whose place of business was at Lincoln, was notified of the defect, and sent a mechanic named Williams to Bartley for the purpose of repairing the engine, which he was unable to do. One of the purchasers then proposed going to Lincoln and attempting to arrange with the manager of the company for an exchange of the old engine for a new one. Such an attempt was not or had not been so much as suggested by the plaintiff. On the contrary, when one of the purchasers asked if he thought it would be successful, he replied that "he did not know, but that he knew that it was their (the company's) business, trading new stuff and taking second-hand stuff in exchange, and he had no doubt that it could be done." One of the purchasers called up the manager and talked with him by telephone about the proposed exchange, and expressed an intention to go to Lincoln for the purpose of attempting to effect it. The plaintiff was present, but did not talk with the manager, nor in any definite way with the purchasers, nor further than to discuss briefly and in a general way, to the effect above related, the probability of an exchange being possible of accomplishment. One of the Ginters started for Lincoln on the same evening, and upon his arrival there traded the old engine for a new one, paying a difference in value in cash. The recovery is for commissions at a contract rate on the selling price of the new engine. The foregoing is the substance of all the evidence touching the matter in issue to which our attention has been invited. We fail to find in it any indications

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that the plaintiff "solicited," or promoted, or in any manner contributed toward the effecting of the exchange of engines, or was of any service, actual or constructive, to either party in the transaction. The answer was a general denial, and the verdict is wholly unsupported by the evidence.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and a new trial awarded.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and a new trial awarded.

REVERSED.

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DANIEL L. CUATT V. NELLIE A. ROSS.

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,197.

**Review: HARMLESS ERROR.** When the evidence is insufficient to support an alleged counterclaim, the defendant cannot complain of errors in the giving or refusing of instructions having reference to it.

ERROR to the district court for Buffalo county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Hamer & Hamer*, for plaintiff in error.

*Fred A. Nye and H. M. Sinclair*, contra.

AMES, C.

The plaintiff below, defendant in error here, was the owner of a tract of land which the defendant contracted to cultivate for a term, for a part of the produce, undertaking to gather and distribute the crop in a manner described in a written agreement between the parties. The

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ground was cultivated, but the plaintiff complains that the defendant neglected properly to care for, preserve, and deliver her share of the produce, as he was required to do, and that he had failed in some respects in caring for the lands and certain buildings thereon, in all to her damage for a considerable sum, which this action was brought to recover. The defendant pleaded by way of counterclaim that, during the term, cattle belonging to the plaintiff were permitted by her to trespass upon the premises and destroy grain in stack and crib, and commit other depredations, to the injury of the defendant, for which he prayed damages. There was a trial to a jury, and a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff, from which the defendant prosecutes error.

The record is rather voluminous, considering the amount involved in the controversy, and an exposition of the evidence in this opinion would hardly be justified by the circumstances. We are convinced, however, from a careful examination of it that it is insufficient to sustain the counterclaim in any degree. There is, indeed, an entire absence of competent evidence tending to show that the plaintiff was ever the owner or custodian of any cattle, and there is affirmative evidence that she never was such. Errors assigned and urged upon the hearing have reference to instructions given or refused concerning the counterclaim, but in view of the state of the evidence they are plainly immaterial. It is also assigned that the evidence is insufficient to support the verdict, but the evidence, with reference to the cause of action set forth in the petition, covers all the matters in issue, and, in so far as it is not undisputed in support of it, is conflicting, so that this court is not called upon to review it.

We recommend therefore that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDFIELD and ERRENSON, C.C., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing

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opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

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**CLARK & LEONARD INVESTMENT COMPANY ET AL., APPELLEES, v. LYDIA LINDGREN ET AL., APPELLANTS.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,201.

1. **Writ of Assistance: LACHES.** An objection that an application for a writ of assistance to put a purchaser at a judicial sale into possession has been too long delayed, is addressed to the sound discretion of the court, and where it is not made to appear that new rights have intervened, or that the defendants have been prejudiced by the delay, such an objection will not be upheld.
2. ——: **DISCRETION OF COURT.** The grantee of a purchaser at a judicial sale is not necessarily incompetent to prosecute an application for a writ of assistance to put him into possession, and whether he shall be permitted so to do or not is a matter dependent upon circumstances and resting largely in the discretion of the court.

APPEAL from the district court for Hitchcock county:  
HANSON M. GRIMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Starr & Reeder*, for appellants.

*W. S. Morlan*, contra.

**AMES, C.**

This is an appeal from an order of the district court granting a writ of assistance to put a grantee of a purchaser at a judicial sale of lands, on a decree of mortgage foreclosure, into possession of the premises. The evidence consists of a stipulation of facts, from which it appears that the foreclosure proceedings were in all respects regular, the defendants and appellants herein having been parties defendant thereto, making personal appearance in the action.

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The premises were in April, 1899, conveyed by sheriff's deed to one W. N. Johnson, a remaining defendant in the suit, who in March, 1903, conveyed them by warranty deed to Thomas E. Swarner. During all this time Lindgren and Lindgren, husband and wife, who are appellants herein, and one of whom seems to have been the principal mortgage debtor, appear to have remained in possession, but whether by sufferance or under what additional circumstances, if any, the record does not disclose, but the stipulation recites that after Swarner had obtained his deed from Johnson he presented it, together with the sheriff's deed, to the Lindgrens "and demanded possession of said premises, and the defendants at that time, and at all times, refused to deliver possession of said premises to this applicant, but claimed to own the land." Afterwards Swarner begun an action in forcible detainer against the Lindgrens in the county court, which, as the stipulation recites, was dismissed by the county judge "on the ground solely that a question of title was involved." But we are left wholly in the dark as to what was the nature or extent of the appellants' claim of title, or how or when it originated, or in what manner it arose. Swarner then made the present application to the district court in the original foreclosure suit, to which his grantor was a party defendant, for a writ of assistance to put him into possession. The defendants, Lindgren and Lindgren, appeared and filed a written objection to the jurisdiction of the court over their persons, and over the subject matter of the proceeding, for the alleged reason that they had, shortly after the judicial sale, entered into a still valid and subsisting contract with the purchaser Johnson for the purchase of the land, of which contract they alleged that Swarner had notice; and for the reason that an action in forcible detainer, instituted by Swarner to recover possession, had terminated in favor of the defendants. These allegations were denied by a paper filed by the applicant, and called a reply, and upon these pleadings, if they may be so called, and upon the stipulation of

facts above mentioned, the matter was submitted to the court, who overruled the objections and granted the writ as prayed. There was a motion for a new trial which was overruled, and which seems to have been abandoned, the cause having been brought to this court by appeal.

We suppose that it must be conceded that the paper filed by the defendants, considered merely as an objection to the jurisdiction of the trial court, was ineffectual. It would be a novelty to hold that a court is deprived of jurisdiction by a claim that the defendant has a good defense to the proceeding on its merits. The sole question presented upon the appeal, therefore, is whether the district court abused its discretion by granting the writ. For an answer to this question, recourse must be had solely to the stipulation of facts, which controverts no allegation of the petition, but contains merely the additional recital that at the time Swarner demanded possession the defendants "claimed to own the land." We think that claim, wholly unsupported, amounts to nothing. They might have claimed to own the earth. It is said that in ancient times one did make such a claim, but that being destitute of evidences of title he was not allowed a hearing. The code expressly enacts (sec. 1021) that judgments in actions of forcible detainer "shall not be a bar to any future action by either party."

Two legal objections are made to the proceeding: One is that its beginning was too long delayed, but this goes only to the discretion of the court, which does not appear to have been abused in a case in which it is not shown that any new rights have intervened since the sale; the other is that the grantee of the purchaser was incompetent to make the application and that it could properly have been made by the latter only. This is a matter, too, which we think rests largely in the discretion of the court. A statute in this state has abolished the common law rule against conveyances of land in adverse possession, and actions are required to be prosecuted in the name of the real party in interest, and, when there has been a trans-

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fer of the subject matter of a pending suit, the court may, in its discretion, allow a substitution of the transferee as a party in the action. We know no means by which, in this instance, the purchaser could have been compelled to prosecute the proceeding, and after having parted with his title he might, perhaps, have been held not to possess sufficient interest to enable him so to do. Finally, we do not discover that the defendants have suffered any wrong or prejudice in person or estate, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

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W. E. JAKWAY v. RANSOM S. PROUDFIT.\*

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,183.

1. False representations as the basis of an action, whether for damages or for the rescission of a contract, are such only as in some manner actually mislead the party to his damage. *American Building & Loan Ass'n v. Bear*, 48 Neb. 455, followed and approved.
2. Prejudicial Error. Action of the trial court in excluding testimony offered by the defendant examined, and held prejudicial.
3. Instructions examined, and held prejudicial.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*Rose & Comstock and I. H. Hatfield*, for plaintiff in error.

*Stewart & Munger, contra.*

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\*Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 67, *post*.

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an action by Ransom S. Proudfit, plaintiff in the lower court, to recover from defendant Jakway the consideration for the purchase price of 50 shares of capital stock of the Lincoln Incubator Company. The petition alleged that the purchase of the stock was induced by the false and fraudulent representations of the defendant concerning the indebtedness of the corporation; that, on the discovery of the deceit practiced upon plaintiff by defendant, plaintiff rescinded the contract and tendered back the shares of stock. It was also alleged that the capital stock is of less value than it would have been had the representations relied upon been true. Defendant answered this petition with a plea of a subsequent ratification of the contract of purchase by the plaintiff after full knowledge of the condition of the company's indebtedness, a general denial of any misrepresentation, and an allegation that plaintiff purchased the stock with full knowledge of the condition of the company. On issues thus joined, there was a trial to the court and jury, verdict for the plaintiff, and judgment on the verdict. To reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

There is no serious controversy in the testimony, except as to the subsequent ratification of the contract by the plaintiff after full knowledge of the condition of the company. On that issue there was a conflict of testimony, which was properly submitted to the jury, and we feel bound by the verdict on that question.

The misrepresentation relied upon for a rescission of the contract was as to the liability of the company as indorser and guarantor of two notes, aggregating \$1,000, executed by one Garoutte in payment for certain shares of capital stock in the corporation. The notes, when taken, had been cashed at their full face value at the Columbia National Bank, and were indorsed by the corporation. The notes were not due at the time of the

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purchase of the capital stock by Proudfit, and the liability of the company as indorser on these notes was not carried as a liability on the books of the corporation. There is no contention that any other liability was concealed from plaintiff by either defendant or the secretary of the corporation. It appeared from such of the evidence as was admitted by the trial court that these notes, which became due after the commencement of this suit, were paid by the maker at maturity. Defendant also offered to prove that the maker of the notes was worth over \$250,000 above all liabilities and exemptions, but this evidence was excluded by the trial court. And by instruction No. 5, given by the court on its own motion, the jury were told that, if they believed that defendant made the false representation alleged and that the same was a material inducement to plaintiff to purchase the stock in question, then it would be immaterial and no defense to the action that, subsequent to the commencement of the action, the Garoutte notes were taken up and the Lincoln Incubator Company thereby relieved from liability thereon, unless they should find that the same was done in pursuance of a contract between the plaintiff and defendant. By instruction No. 7 the court told the jury, in substance, that the fact of the solvency of Garoutte was wholly immaterial. In other words, the court submitted the case to the jury on the theory that, if the representation of the indebtedness of the corporation was false and if such representation was relied upon by the plaintiff as an inducement to the contract, he was entitled to rescind, whether any actual damage accrued by reason of the misrepresentation or not. On the contrary, defendant requested instructions which predicated plaintiff's right of recovery on the fact that the representation was false and that he had suffered material damage by reason of such false representation. All of these instructions were refused by the trial court, so that the only question at issue is whether a rescission of a contract is warranted for fraudulent representations inducing it, where no actual

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damage is occasioned by such deceit. In 1 Story, Equity Jurisprudence (13th ed.), sec. 203, it is said: "And in the next place the party must have been misled to his prejudice or injury; for courts of equity do not, any more than courts of law, sit for the purpose of enforcing moral obligations or correcting unconscientious acts, which are followed by no loss or damage. It has been very justly remarked, that to support an action at law for a misrepresentation there must be a fraud committed by the defendant, and a damage resulting from such fraud to the plaintiff. And it has been observed with equal truth by a very learned judge in equity, that fraud and damage coupled together will entitle the injured party to relief in any court of justice." In Bispham, Principles of Equity (6th ed.), sec. 217, it is said that "fraud without damage is no ground for relief at law or in equity." Again, in 2 Pomeroy, Equity Jurisprudence (3d ed.), sec. 898, the rule is laid down that "the party must suffer some pecuniary loss or injury as the natural consequence of the conduct induced by the misrepresentation. In short, the representation must be so material that its falsity renders it unconscientious in the person making it to enforce the agreement or other transaction which it has caused. Fraud without resulting pecuniary damage is not a ground for the exercise of remedial jurisdiction, equitable or legal; courts of justice do not act as mere tribunals of conscience to enforce duties which are purely moral. If any pecuniary loss is shown to have resulted, the court will not inquire into the extent of the injury." In 14 Am. & Eng. Ency. Law (2d ed.), p. 140, it is stated: "Relief or redress will not be granted, either by way of rescission or by way of damages, at law or in equity, if it clearly appears that the party complaining has not sustained any pecuniary damages, nor been otherwise put in any worse position than he would have occupied if there had been no fraud; but when we go beyond this broad proposition we meet with difficulties, and find some conflict in the decisions." While, as suggested in

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the authority last quoted, there is some diversity of opinion in the adjudged cases as to the nature of the damages which will warrant a rescission of a contract, the very great weight of authority, however, is in line with the text writers above quoted on the proposition that it must be an actual pecuniary damage, as distinguished from a nominal or theoretical injury. The rule in this state seems to be in harmony with the strong current of authority on this question. *American Building & Loan Ass'n v. Bear*, 48 Neb. 455, was an action for the rescission of a contract of purchase of shares of stock of the association. The misrepresentations relied upon were as to the management of the corporation by well known and eminent citizens of Iowa and Minnesota. In determining the question of the right of rescission, Post, C. J., said:

"False representations as the basis of an action, whether for damages or for the rescission of a contract, are such only as in some manner actually mislead the complaining party to his damage. 'A statement made with intent to defraud a subscriber, but without that effect, is immaterial; mere intent without damage is insufficient.' 1 Cook, Stock and Stockholders (3d ed.), sec. 149. See, also, *Keller v. Johnson*, 11 Ind. 337; *Robertson v Parks*, 76 Md. 118; *Wainwright v. Weske*, 82 Cal. 193."

This decision is in harmony with the holding in *Lorenzen v. Kansas City Investment Co.*, 44 Neb. 99, and is fully supported in principle by our later holding in *Gerner v. Yates*, 61 Neb. 101.

It follows from the above stated principles that the trial court erred in excluding the evidence offered by the defendant, and in giving paragraphs No. 5 and No. 7 of instructions above set out. We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing

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opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed October 18, 1906. *Judgment of reversal adhered to:*

1. **Contract: FRAUD: RESCISSION.** A purchaser of real or personal property is entitled to the benefit of his bargain, in other words, to receive the identical property purchased; and where the vendor by fraud or false representations has conveyed to him or induced him to accept something not contemplated by his contract, he may rescind the sale and recover what he has paid, without showing that he has sustained any pecuniary injury or damage thereby.
2. ——: RESCISSION: EVIDENCE. Where, however, a purchaser receives what he actually purchased, and bases his right to rescind on some false representation as to its quality, condition, or matter affecting its value, he must show that such representation was material, and that he was misled thereby to his injury and damage.
3. Former conclusion, *Jakway v. Proudfit, ante*, p. 62, adhered to.

**BARNES, J.**

When this case was before us the first time it was considered by Department No. 2 of the Commission. An opinion was prepared by Judge OLDHAM, and adopted by the court, reversing the judgment of the court below. *Jakway v. Proudfit, ante*, p. 62. A rehearing was ordered, and the case has been presented to the court both upon printed briefs and oral arguments. The defendant in error in an able, comprehensive and exhaustive brief contends that our former opinion is wrong; that the rule there announced that "false representations as the basis of an action, whether for damages or for the rescission of a contract, are such only as in some manner actually misled the party to his damage," is opposed to the great weight of authority, and should not be adopted in this jurisdiction. Many cases are cited and quoted from to

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sustain this contention, and it appears that there are two lines of decisions in this country, one holding that to justify a purchaser in rescinding his contract and suing to recover the price paid for the thing purchased, it is not necessary for him to show that he has sustained an actual pecuniary loss by reason of the false representations, and the other holding that the false representations must have been material, and have misled the purchaser to his injury and damage. An analysis of the cases shows that, although there seems to be a conflict between them, yet, as a matter of fact, no such conflict exists, and they can easily be harmonized. In the first class of cases the holding is based on the rule that the purchaser is entitled to have the thing actually purchased. A pertinent illustration of this rule is found in *Hansen v. Allen*, 117 Wis. 61, where it is said:

"It is enough to say that the plaintiff was entitled to have the particular piece of timbered land with a stream of water upon it which had been pointed out to him, and for which he actually contracted, instead of a different piece of land situated at some other place."

Again, in *Bristol v. Braidwood*, 28 Mich 191, where the defendant purchased a team of horses of the plaintiff, for which he gave a note of a third party, which he represented was secured by a first mortgage, and it appeared that the representation was false, the note being in fact secured by a second mortgage, it was held that the plaintiff was entitled to have what he bargained for, that is to say, a note secured by a first mortgage. We think these cases are sufficient to illustrate the rule that the purchaser is entitled to the benefit of his purchase, and is not obliged to accept something he did not buy. With this rule we are in strict accord, and believe it to be in line with the great weight of authority in this country. Now, if the facts in the case at bar bring it within this rule, then the plaintiff was entitled to recover, and our former opinion should be reversed. It seems to us, however, from a careful examination of the record, that the

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defendant in error has not brought himself within this rule. He purchased stock of the Lincoln Incubator Company, and obtained the thing he purchased. The question, then, is whether the alleged false representations were material, and misled him to his injury and damage. The record discloses that the defendant was seeking an investment, and to that end first approached one F. W. Brown, who was a stockholder and officer of the corporation; that he sought and obtained from Brown information as to the financial standing and condition of the company, together with the nature and extent of its business; that he disclosed to Brown his intention to purchase an interest in the company and finance its affairs, if he could obtain such an interest as he desired; that he was informed by Brown, and other officers of the corporation with whom he talked, that, perhaps, Jakway would sell his stock. Thereupon he spent several days investigating the books and the affairs of the corporation to ascertain its financial condition, and was told that the debts of the corporation did not exceed some \$600 or \$800. He also ascertained the substantial truth of this statement by an examination of the books, from which he claims to have made a memorandum statement. Thereupon he visited Jakway, and asked him what he would take for his stock in the corporation. He first offered Jakway \$1,500 for his holdings, which was refused. He then offered him \$1,800, which was also refused. Jakway then told the defendant that he would take \$2,000 for his stock. Defendant said he would give it, and they agreed to meet at noon of that day, at the office of the corporation, for the purpose of closing the deal and having the stock transferred on the books of the company. The foregoing facts are undisputed. When they met at the office of the company defendant claims that he exhibited his memorandum to Jakway, and asked him if it was correct, and he testifies that Jakway told him it was. On the other hand, Jakway swore that he never made any such statement; that he did not know the financial condition of the com-

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pany or the amount of its debts, because he was not the bookkeeper, and knew no more about it than was known by the defendant himself.

As to the allegation that Jakway represented that there had been paid into said corporation, upon certain stock, the sum of \$1,000 in cash, when, in truth and in fact, the purchaser of said stock had not paid the sum of \$1,000 in cash, but had given his promissory note to said corporation for the same, which note said corporation had indorsed, sold and discounted at the Columbia National Bank of Lincoln, Nebraska, no evidence was introduced to support it. On the other hand, it appears that Proudfit, as soon as he obtained possession of the Jakway stock, became very active in the company's affairs; that in about a week thereafter he claims to have ascertained the fact that one L. W. Garoutte had purchased \$1,000 worth of stock of the corporation; had given his notes, amounting to \$1,000, in payment therefor; that the notes were indorsed by the company and sold to the Columbia National Bank, for which it received the sum of \$1,000 in cash. He testifies that when he discovered this fact he was dissatisfied; that he informed the directors of the company that the matter must be fixed up. It appears that in answer to such demand Jakway was sent for, who agreed to take up the notes, and relieve the corporation of any possible contingent liability thereon. It appears that this arrangement was satisfactory, and was carried out in due time; that in accordance with his demands he was elected a director and treasurer of the corporation, which office was formerly held by Jakway; that he proposed to go forward and finance the concern in accordance with his original plan, if matters could be arranged to his satisfaction. He testified in part as follows:

"I told them that everything had to be cleared up, so it would be to my entire satisfaction in every respect. I positively said I would not continue with the company, except on condition that everything was cleared up, and to my satisfaction. Q. What were the things particularly

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that you insisted on that should be cleaned up before you proceeded with the company? A. The main issue was the Garoutte notes. Q. Was there anything else involved? A. There was a receipt that did not look clear to me at the meeting at the Capital Hotel. Q. Relating to the McCarthy stock? A. Yes, sir. Q. Was there something in connection with that that you insisted on being cleaned up? A. Yes, sir."

Cross-examination: "Q. You were present when ~~you~~ were elected a director, weren't you? A. Yes, ~~sir~~. Q. And present when elected treasurer? A. ~~Yes~~, sir. Q. And wasn't one of the conditions ~~you made~~ as to going on with the company, and advancing \$5,000 of your money, and procuring \$10,000 more to promote this enterprise, that you ~~should also~~ be manager of the business of the company? A. It was the condition that I should ~~know all~~ about its business. Yes, sir. Q. Didn't you insist, also, that you would be business manager of the company in McCarthy's place, and that McCarthy should resign his place? A. No, sir. I don't know that I did. Q. Who would know, if you don't—these people who have testified before about it? Who do you think would know, if you don't know? A. I wanted it all cleaned up, and new officers elected, and everything of the kind. Q. You wanted to be elected manager didn't you? A. I certainly wanted to have some voice in the matter."

From this evidence it seems reasonably clear that defendant was not dissatisfied with the condition he ascertained to exist in reference to the Garoutte notes, but rather with his inability to secure the entire management of the corporation to himself. Again, it seems to us that, if it be conceded that the evidence shows that Jakway stated that the financial condition of the company was, as disclosed by the memorandum, made by defendant, such representation was substantially true. We are of the opinion that this case should be ruled by *American Building & Loan Ass'n v. Bear*, 48 Neb. 455. The opinion in that case is an able and exhaustive one, and

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correctly states the rule of law which should be applied in cases where, as in the case at bar, the buyer obtains the thing purchased, and is compelled to rely for his right to rescind on false representations as to matters affecting its quality, condition or value. In such cases, the party must have been misled to his injury or damage. To hold otherwise would enable a purchaser to rescind his contract for any misstatement of the vendor, however trivial. We would thus overturn the ordinary and well-established rules governing the purchase and sale of property of all kinds.

It seems clear to us that the conclusion arrived at by our former opinion is sound and should be adhered to.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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**UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY V. CHARLES NELSON.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,196.

1. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the judgment of the district court.
2. Instructions examined, and held not prejudicial.

ERROR to the district court for Custer county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*John N. Baldwin, Edson Rich and John A. Sheean, for plaintiff in error.*

*C. H. Holcomb, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an action by the plaintiff in the court below, a shipper of live stock, against the defendant railroad company for damages alleged to have been occasioned by an unnecessary and negligent delay in transporting

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a car-load of cattle from South Omaha, Nebraska, to Callaway, Nebraska. There was a trial to the court and jury below, judgment for plaintiff for \$61.70; and to reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

The facts underlying the controversy are that on Friday, October 9, 1903, plaintiff shipped a car-load of cattle from South Omaha to Callaway over defendant's railroad. The car was transported to Kearney, Nebraska, over defendant's main line where it was to be transferred to a branch line to be delivered at Callaway. There was only one train a day on the Callaway branch, and this train leaves Kearney at about 6:30 A. M. When the main line train reached Kearney on Saturday, the train on the Callaway branch had departed, and, as there was no Sunday train on the branch line, the stock were unloaded and yarded there over Sunday. On Monday morning plaintiff loaded his cattle in the car before the train left Kearney for Callaway, and this car was included in the train when it was first made up. But the conductor of the train claimed that he had no authority to take the car without the shipping bill, which appeared to have been with the yardmaster. Plaintiff insisted on the car being taken and tried to find the yardmaster to get the car billed out, but failed to do so. Accordingly, the car was "kicked loose" from the train and left standing on the side-track until about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, when the cattle were unloaded, and again yarded until Tuesday morning, and then transported to Callaway. The only conflict in the evidence is as to whether it was the negligence of the yardmaster, or of the conductor of the train, in not sending the car to Callaway on Monday; and, as far as plaintiff's right of recovery is concerned, it is wholly immaterial which of defendant's employees was at fault, as the evidence clearly shows that the delay at Kearney on Monday was wholly unnecessary.

The only objection urged against the instructions of the trial court is that they were given on a theory that there was evidence tending to show an unnecessary delay

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in the shipment. We think this theory was the only one on which the court could have instructed under the evidence. There is a technical contention that the evidence shows that the delay, if any, occurred on the shipment from Kearney to Callaway, and not from Omaha to Callaway as pleaded in the petition. This is purely specious, as the contract of shipment was from Omaha to Callaway, and any unreasonable delay at any intervening point in making this shipment is sufficient to constitute the cause of action alleged upon.

As we are pointed to no reversible error in defendant's brief, and as the quantum of damages awarded was very reasonable under the testimony, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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GOTTLIEB WESSEL v. JOHN S. BISHOP.

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,123.

1. **Instructions: REVIEW.** Rulings of the court upon objections to instructions given and refused examined, and held without error.
2. **Misconduct of Juror.** Proof of mere indiscretion in the conduct of a juror is not sufficient to avoid a verdict, but the proof must show that his conduct is of such a character that prejudice may be presumed.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*W. E. Stewart*, for plaintiff in error.

*John S. Bishop, pro se.*

## EPPERSON, C.

The defendant in error sued the plaintiff in error for the value of his services as an attorney at law in several cases, in each of which the defendant or some member of his family was a litigant. Trial was had to a jury resulting in a verdict and judgment for plaintiff, defendant in error.

The first assignment of error presented by defendant in his brief is the refusal of an instruction, the object of which was to take from the jury all consideration of an item of \$10, charged by the plaintiff for his services in an action against the adult sons of the defendant. Defendant's sons were in jail, charged with crime, and upon the request of their sister plaintiff procured them bail, for which service he neither received nor charged a fee. He rendered no further service until the defendant employed him to counsel and defend his sons. Defendant claims that the contract testified to by the plaintiff was within the statute of frauds, the same not being in writing, and the services rendered for another. Such evidence we think shows an original undertaking, in which the plaintiff extended credit to the defendant, and therefore the contract was not within the statute of frauds. *Williams v. Auten*, 62 Neb. 832.

2. Plaintiff in his petition admitted the receipt of \$20 upon account sued on, and upon the trial admitted the payment thereon of \$2.50 additional. In his answer, defendant denied that he employed the plaintiff in the several actions alleged in the petition, except in one certain injunction suit in which plaintiff's services were of a value not exceeding \$25, which has been paid. The testimony of both litigants shows payment by defendant to plaintiff of sundry amounts covering a multitude of minor transactions and expenditures, some of which having no connection with the subject matter of this litigation. These items, aggregating \$58, defendant contended should be credited to him upon the account sued on, and now al-

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leges that the court erred in giving to the jury the instruction containing the following language: "The burden is upon the defendant to prove any payments in addition to the \$20, admitted in plaintiff's petition, and in addition to the \$2.50, admitted in his testimony." He argues that by reason of this instruction the jury were at liberty to infer that the defendant had some burden or unusual duty in respect to the several items in excess of \$22.50, composing the sum of \$58. The reasons which the defendant gives for the purpose of showing error appear to us as good reasons for the giving of the instruction. The burden of proof was upon the defendant to show that the payments not specifically alleged in the pleadings, but testified to, were made in part payment of the claim sued on, instead of upon other items of indebtedness.

3. As a further reason for reversal, defendant alleges misconduct on the part of the jury. The conduct complained of is stated in the affidavit of one of the jurors, as follows: "That throughout the deliberations of said jury on said cause, Mr. Minor S. Bacon, one of said jurors, repeatedly stated, in substance, that he never would agree to return a verdict for less than the whole amount claimed by the plaintiff, and was quite decided in trying to get the other jurors to agree with him. Said juror Bacon further stated, in substance and effect, that he was himself an attorney, and had knowledge of the reasonableness of rates charged for legal services by the plaintiff in question in this action, and knew from his own experience that the plaintiff was entitled to recover all he sued for in said cause. That while so deliberating in said jury room, said juror Bacon further said, in substance, that he was acquainted with the defendant, and knew that he was a hard man to get along with, and that he had trouble with everybody he had dealings with, and was always in litigation." This was corroborated by the affidavits of seven other jurors. The position of this lawyer juror, shown by the first paragraph of the affidavit, might have been prompted by a fair and impartial consideration of the evidence; and

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the facts stated in the third paragraph are clearly insufficient to justify an avoidance of the verdict. Other facts shown by the affidavit are of a more serious nature, but as the amount of the recovery is supported by sufficient evidence, and as the objectionable matter is limited to the opinion of the juror whose conduct is challenged, we cannot see our way clear to reverse the judgment of the lower court. Evidence as to the value of plaintiff's services was given by lawyers of high standing at this bar, and varies only as to one item or fee of \$100 sued for by plaintiff; three witnesses fixing the value at a considerably larger sum, one at \$75 and two at \$25. Proof of mere indiscretion on the part of a juror is not sufficient to avoid the verdict; but the proof must show that his wrong is of such a character that prejudice may be presumed. The conduct complained of was very near the dividing line, but it is not clearly prejudicial.

"Where a new trial is asked for on the ground of misconduct of a juror or of the prevailing party, the finding of the trial court in support of the verdict will not be set aside unless the evidence of misconduct is of a clear and convincing character." *Omaha Fair & Exposition Ass'n v. Missouri P. R. Co.*, 42 Neb. 105.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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Diemer & Guilfoil v. Grant County.

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**DIEMER & GUILFOIL, APPELLANTS, v. GRANT COUNTY ET AL.,  
APPELLEES.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,126.

**Taxation: ASSESSMENT.** The action of the county board of equalization in fixing the place for listing and assessment of personal property, under the provisions of section 42, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1905, will not be disturbed, unless an abuse of discretion is shown.

**APPEAL from the district court for Grant county: JOHN R. HANNA, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*R. C. Noleman and W. L. Stark, for appellants.*

*H. M. Sullivan and L. B. Unkefer, contra.*

**EPPERSON, C.**

This action originated before the board of equalization of Grant county upon the petition of M. E. Harmston and others, who petitioned the county board to assess to the appellants 1,500 head of cattle in Hyannis precinct and School District Number 1, instead of in Collins precinct and School District Number 3. The order of the county board granting the petition was sustained by the district court on appeal.

The testimony of the appellants shows the following facts: Appellants resided in Collins precinct upon a cattle ranch owned by them. They also owned and operated another and a smaller ranch or farm in Hyannis precinct, separated, and at a distance of about 15 miles from the home ranch. That the appellants are engaged in the business of buying, feeding and selling cattle, and owned in the spring of 1904, and for some time prior thereto, 4,000 head of cattle, on account of which they were liable for assessment for revenue purposes in the year 1904. Appellants used the Hyannis precinct ranch for the purpose

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of producing hay, and for a winter and spring range for cattle, and from November, 1903, to about May 1, 1904, had there from 600 to 1,900 head of cattle. At times a number of cattle would be removed to the home ranch for dipping or other purposes, but soon thereafter the same or other cattle were returned, and in this way about 1,500 head were kept upon the Hyannis ranch grazing over the meadows, valleys and hills in and near the same, until about the first of May, 1904, when they were shipped or returned to the home ranch for summer grazing. Upon this ranch there is a small corral, stable and four wells, sufficient to supply water for the cattle, and also a small dwelling house used by the owners and their employees during the feeding and haying seasons. Section 42, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1905, provides: "In all questions that may arise under this chapter as to the proper place to list personal property, \* \* \* if between several places in the same county, the place for listing and assessment shall be determined and fixed by the county board; \* \* \* and when fixed in either case, shall be as binding as if fixed in this chapter." This section makes it the duty of the county board to determine where within the county personal property shall be assessed, when questions arise, as in this case, and its decision will not be disturbed unless an abuse of discretion is shown. Under the facts stated above, the order of the county board, fixing Hyannis precinct as the place for listing and assessing the 1,500 head of cattle, is reasonable and just.

We therefore recommend that the decision of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons appearing in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

## W. T. MORRIS ET AL. V. ALFORD H. PERSING.

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,163.

1. **Chattel Mortgage: SALE BY MORTGAGOR.** The making of a written contract by a mortgagor of chattels in possession, providing for the sale and future disposition of the property, and providing for the payment or satisfaction of the mortgage indebtedness, is neither *malum in se* nor *malum prohibitum*.
2. **Instructions: REVIEW.** The giving of instructions set out in the opinion *held* error.

ERROR to the district court for Merrick county: JAMES G. REEDER, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*Patterson & Patterson*, for plaintiffs in error.

*W. T. Thompson and George W. Ayres, contra.*

EPPERSON, C.

Plaintiff sued the defendants in the district court for Merrick county to recover \$200, which sum was advanced by plaintiff to defendants as part of the purchase price of certain property described in their written contract. The contract was made October 24, 1903, and provided: "The said W. T. Morris and C. A. Burke have sold and agree to convey by bill of sale on the first day of January, 1904, their meat market and butcher business in Central City, Nebraska, including all fixtures therein," etc. It also contained the following provisions: "A. H. Persing agrees to purchase said business and articles and to pay therefor the sum of \$900 as follows, to wit, \$200 cash, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, and shall further have the option of paying said balance of \$700 in cash on the first day of January, 1904, or to pay \$200 cash on said date and assume an indebtedness of \$500 now existing against said business and articles; the said W. T. Morris and C. A. Burke to retain possession of and conduct said business until the first day of January, 1904."

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The indebtedness referred to consisted of a certain chattel mortgage held by one Wright, securing a note given by defendants for \$500, payable "on or before July 1, 1904." The mortgage had not then been filed of record, but plaintiff had knowledge thereof. He sought to rescind his contract on the grounds that the defendants did not have the consent of the mortgagee to such sale; and alleges that he did not know on the date of contract that the mortgagee had authority to take immediate possession of the property upon a disposition thereof by mortgagors. The trial in the lower court resulted in a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff and defendants bring the cause to this court by proceedings in error.

It is shown by the evidence that subsequent to the date of the contract, and before January 1, 1904, plaintiff requested the mortgagee to release the defendants from said indebtedness, and to accept plaintiff therefor, and that the mortgagee refused. The evidence further shows that on December 31, 1903, the plaintiff and defendants invoiced the stock of meat preparatory to the delivery thereof to the plaintiff; and that the plaintiff made no further attempt to comply with the terms of the contract. These facts are uncontradicted. It also appears that the mortgagee had not, on January 1, 1904, given his written consent to the sale of the mortgaged property. Plaintiff testified that before January 1, 1904, he saw the defendant Morris, and told him that the mortgagee refused to take him, and defendant replied that he did not know what he would do if the mortgagee did not accept him. This is denied by the defendant Morris. No other evidence was given to prove that plaintiff notified the defendants of his election to pay the \$200 and to assume the mortgage indebtedness. It will be observed that the contract did not provide that in case plaintiff elected to assume the mortgage a release of the defendants from such indebtedness must be procured. There is a great difference between the assuming by a third party of an indebtedness and a novation. In the former, the liability of the original

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obligor to the obligee remains unchanged, in the latter, the original obligor is relieved. The option might have been exercised by plaintiff's assuming the mortgage debt; instead of this he attempted to bring about a novation, which was not required. The mortgagee simply refused to release the defendants. He was not asked to do more.

The court gave to the jury the following instruction: "If in this case you find that the plaintiff did, in good faith, exercise said option and elect to pay \$200 cash and assume an incumbrance of \$500, and you further find that the owner of the incumbrance on said property refused to permit the plaintiff to exercise his said option above mentioned, then you are instructed that plaintiff will have the right to rescind said contract and recover from the defendants the money paid thereon." This instruction was not justified by the evidence.

The court further instructed the jury, in substance, that it was the duty of the defendants to procure the consent in writing of the mortgagee to the making of the sale contemplated in the contract on or before January 1, 1904, and that in the absence of such consent defendants had no right to make such sale, and could not retain the said sum of \$200. Section 9, ch. 12, Comp. St. 1905, prohibits the actual sale and disposition of mortgaged property without the written consent of the owner and holder of the debt thereby secured, but it does not prohibit the mortgagor from contracting for the future disposition of the mortgaged chattels. And the making of a written contract, wherein the mortgagor agrees to sell and deliver the mortgaged chattels at a future time, and in which the mortgage is contemplated and the payment or satisfaction thereof provided, is neither *malum in se* nor *malum prohibitum*. Under the terms of this contract, the plaintiff obligated himself to exercise one of two options therein expressed, and it was his duty at the time fixed by the contract to notify the defendants of his election, and demand of them the execution of the contract on their part. Then, and not until then, upon their failure to deliver to

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him a legal and effective bill of sale which would enable him to enjoy the fruits of his contract, could he demand a rescission.

The giving of each of the above instructions was error, and we therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded to the district court for a new trial.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause is remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

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JAMES K. P. PINE, APPELLEE, V. DANIEL MANGUS ET AL.,  
APPELLANTS.

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,179.

**Mortgage: Assignment: Payments to Mortgagee.** A mortgagee of real estate assigned its mortgage, and guaranteed the payment thereof, and thereafter collected the principal and interest, but failed to account therefor to its assignee, who instituted this action to foreclose the mortgage. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to show that the mortgagee was the agent of its assignee, and the payments to it satisfied the mortgage indebtedness.

APPEAL from the district court for Red Willow county:  
ROBERT C. OBB, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

*Tibbets Bros. & Morey and W. S. Morlan*, for appellants.

*M. A. Hartigan and C. E. Eldred*, contra.

EPPERSON, C.

On the first day of March, 1888, a mortgage was given to the Guarantee Loan & Trust Company of Kansas City, Missouri, by one Mangus, conveying 160 acres of land in

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Red Willow county to secure the payment of a loan of \$750 due in five years. The principal indebtedness was evidenced by one bond or note, which was made payable at the office of the mortgagee in Kansas City. The record shows the following undisputed facts: That on the 25th day of September, 1888, the mortgage was assigned to the appellee Pine, by the execution of an ordinary written assignment, and the delivery of the bond, coupons and mortgage, and with the guaranty on the part of the mortgagee, hereinafter referred to as the loan company, that the interest would be paid promptly, and the principal within two years after due. By mesne conveyance from the mortgagor, Mangus, the mortgaged property was on March 17, 1893, deeded to the appellant Gustofson, who took the title subject to the mortgage. Soon thereafter he paid \$250 of the principal and obtained, by negotiation with the loan company, whose assignment to the appellee had not then been recorded, an agreement extending the time for the payment of \$500 for two years from March 1, 1893. The extension agreement was submitted by the loan company to him, and contained the following: "The Eastern Banking Company, J. K. P. Pine, the legal owner and holder, has agreed to and does extend the time of the payment of \$500 thereof for a term of two years from March 1, 1893, the consideration being the loan as first made." The coupons thereto attached were, however, made payable to J. K. P. Pine. This agreement and the coupons when signed and forwarded to the loan company which retained them until paid, when they were returned to Gustofson, with a written satisfaction of the mortgage signed and acknowledged by the loan company, and which was duly recorded November 7, 1896. None of these payments, either of principal or interest, unless it be the interest maturing September 1, 1893, were remitted by the loan company to the appellee, nor did he know of such payments being made. On the 3d day of July, 1897, the appellee caused his assignment to be recorded in the office of the register of deeds of Red Willow county; and on the

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20th day of October, 1899, instituted this action in the district court for Red Willow county to foreclose the mortgage, alleging default in the payment of the principal sum falling due March 1, 1893. The appellants Gustofson and Fagerstrom, and other necessary parties, were made defendants. The district court found for the appellee, and decreed a foreclosure of the mortgage for the satisfaction of the claimed amount. From this decree the appellants Gustofson and Fagerstrom appeal.

On September 24, 1893, Gustofson conveyed the land by his warranty deed to Fagerstrom, who claims to be a purchaser in good faith, without notice, of the appellee's assignment. It is apparent that the appellant Fagerstrom had actual notice of all the facts known to his grantor, and knew of the assignment, and therefore he has no greater equities than Gustofson would have, had such transfer never been made. The sole question here presented is whether or not the loan company was the agent of its assignee, the appellee herein, clothed with actual or ostensible authority to collect the principal and interest. The appellee claims that the loan company had no authority to extend the time for the payment of \$500 of the principal, nor to collect any part of the principal or interest at any time; and in his deposition states that no such authority existed. But we take into consideration the facts testified to by him, and other evidence showing the relationship which existed between him and the loan company, rather than his opinions or conclusions as to their relations. About the time of the assignment of the mortgage in controversy, the appellee also procured seven other mortgages from the loan company, and regarding his relations generally with the loan company he says, in substance, that he did in one or two cases accept part payment and extend the time for the payment of the remainder; that the loan company usually sent its check, and requested him to send coupons; that at least two other loans were collected by the loan company for him. He also attached as exhibits to his deposition letters re-

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ceived by him from the loan company regarding the collection of several mortgages, from which it appears that the loan company was looking after collections on account of their guaranty of the payment. And in a letter dated January 6, 1893, the loan company said: "If it is your wish that the collection of these coupons be given to other parties, we will give the matter no further attention. I request that you indicate your wishes with reference to these matters at once." And April 24, 1903, wrote: "Some of your loans have matured, and will be glad to give you any assistance needed in the collection thereof." These were transactions of the same character, the proof of which goes to show that the appellee had authorized the loan company to collect such debts. "Such authority may be inferred from the fact that similar acts, through a series of transactions relating to a like business, have been uniformly ratified by the creditor." *Harrison Nat. Bank v. Austin*, 65 Neb. 632.

But the proof is not limited to facts showing general authority. In his deposition, appellee admits that he did agree to an extension of two years' time for the payment of \$500 of the principal, upon the payment of \$250. After agreeing to this he did nothing toward the collection of the paper, until the amount thereof had been paid and the loan company had failed in business. As a reason for his inexcusable neglect he says: "These people," referring to the loan company, "assured me that these papers were all completed, and that all that I would have to do was to put them in my safe and receive the principal and interest when due, and the company would guarantee the payment of it." Upon these facts it appears that the appellee relied upon the agency of the loan company for the collection of the principal and interest; and it makes no difference whether that agency was authorized by express contract, or implied from the relationship existing between them. In *Thomson v. Shelton*, 49 Neb. 644, it was held: "Ostensible authority to act as agent may be conferred if the party to be charged as principal affirmatively or

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intentionally, or by lack of ordinary care, causes or allows third persons to trust and act upon such apparent agency."

In the case at bar, proof of the lack of ordinary care in looking after his property, either personally or through some other agent, and the other facts proved convince us that he depended upon the agency of the loan company to protect his interests, and that Gustofson was justified in relying upon such agency and making the payments as he did. The loan company having authority to collect the money, payment to it satisfied the lien, and the appellee's right to foreclose thereby ceased.

The appellants, in the court below, asked that the said mortgage be declared no lien upon said premises; that it be canceled of record, and the title to said land be quieted in the appellant Charles Fagerstrom, and that the appellee's action be dismissed. Appellants were entitled to this, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed, and that court be directed to dismiss the appellee's action, and enter his judgment therein canceling said mortgage of record, and affirming the title to said premises in the appellant, Charles Fagerstrom, in so far as the same is affected by the said mortgage and the assignment thereof.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons appearing in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed, with instructions to the district court to enter his judgment dismissing the appellee's case, and canceling his said mortgage of record, and quieting the title to said premises in the appellant, Charles Fagerstrom, in so far as the same is affected by said mortgage and the assignment thereof.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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Baker Furniture Co. v. Hall.

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**BAKER FURNITURE COMPANY ET AL. V. RICHARD S. HALL.\***

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,203.

**Corporation: TAKING ASSETS OF FIRM: LIABILITY.** A corporation organized for the sole purpose of continuing the business of a partnership firm, which takes over to itself the ownership and control of the assets thereof, thereby assumes the debts of such firm to the extent of the property so received.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WILLIS G. SEARS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Brome & Burnett*, for plaintiffs in error.

*John F. Stout*, contra.

**EPPERSON, C.**

On the 16th day of February, 1903, the defendant in error herein obtained a judgment in the district court for Douglas county against Charles Shiverick & Company, and against the individual members of that firm, for \$6,997.60, the amount then due from the judgment debtors upon a promissory note. Later an execution was issued upon the judgment, which was returned *nulla bona*. The defendant in error, appellee, hereinafter called plaintiff, then instituted this action in the district court for Douglas county against the Baker Furniture Company, contending that the latter is liable for the payment of said indebtedness, as the successor in business of the judgment debtor Charles Shiverick & Company; that it assumed and agreed to pay the debts of said copartnership, and took over to itself, without consideration and in fraud of creditors, the assets of said debtor company, which is insolvent.

In October, 1899, and for ten years prior thereto, Arthur S. Shiverick and Ella C. Shiverick were engaged in the retail furniture business in the city of Omaha, conducting

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 93, *post*.

said business as a copartnership under the firm name of Charles Shiverick & Company. At that time the members of the firm and Joseph L. Baker organized a corporation known as the Shiverick Furniture Company, and in 1903 changed its corporate name to Baker Furniture Company. The circumstances attending the organization of the corporation are as follows: The Shivericks had been doing an unprofitable business, and their liabilities then greatly exceeded their assets. They were indebted to Baker in the sum of \$5,750; to the plaintiff in the sum of \$6,000, later reduced to judgment; to the First National Bank in the sum of \$34,000; and to certain of their relatives in sums aggregating \$27,000, and owed merchandise indebtedness amounting to about \$6,100. Just prior to the incorporating the Shivericks, Baker and the First National Bank entered into a certain written agreement, in which the Shivericks and Baker agreed to form the corporation for the purpose of conducting the furniture business, and in which it was also provided that the Shivericks should secure forgiveness and relinquishment of the debts owing to their relatives, and to pay to the bank \$10,000 of its indebtedness, and for which they gave their notes; and Baker agreed to pay \$5,000 of the bank's indebtedness, \$5,000 of the merchandise indebtedness, and cause the corporation to assume liability for the balance of the merchandise debts; to cancel his own indebtedness against the copartnership, and to pay \$1,000 of the personal obligations of the Shivericks; in consideration for which he was to receive from the Shivericks assignment of shares of stock in the corporation. The bank agreed to accept the notes of the Shivericks for \$10,000, and the \$5,000 cash from Baker, and to forgive \$19,000, the balance of their indebtedness. In the written agreement there was also this provision: "The purpose and intention of this agreement is to enable said Shivericks through said corporation to continue in business and to prevent their business failure; and the understanding is that said Shivericks will and shall be absolutely freed from all in-

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debtedness to all parties, except on said notes to said bank, aggregating ten thousand dollars (\$10,000), and such other notes and evidences of indebtedness as it now holds, and except an indebtedness of said Ella Shiverick to said Baker not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000) which she may hereafter owe to him for moneys which he may advance on her behalf."

The corporation was organized, and 499 shares of the stock were issued to the Shivericks, and one share to Baker, who paid nothing therefor. And, as agreed previously, 384 shares issued to the Shivericks were assigned to Baker. The property of the copartnership was turned over by proper conveyances to the corporation, and the business conducted under the management of Charles Shiverick in the same manner and for the same purposes as was the copartnership. By the incorporation and the agreements leading to it, the Shiverick copartnership was relieved of all indebtedness, except the note due to the plaintiff, and the \$1,100 of the merchandise indebtedness. The corporation undertook no business other than that previously conducted by the copartnership, nor did they acquire any property other than that received from the copartnership. The evidence adduced shows that when the corporation was organized the Shivericks and Baker considered the property of the company, which was turned over to the corporation, of the value of about \$25,000, and that the capital stock of the corporation was worth one-half its face value. The findings and judgment of the lower court were for plaintiff, and the Baker Furniture Company have filed their petition in error in this court, alleging that the findings and judgment of the court are contrary to the evidence, and contrary to law. The evidence above referred to clearly supports the allegations of fact alleged in the petition, and this leaves us to determine whether or not the findings and judgment of the lower court are contrary to law.

This plaintiff in error maintains that, as the corporation did not by express contract assume the payment of the co-

partnership's indebtedness, and that as no actual fraud was proved, it necessarily follows that the findings and judgment of the lower court were not sustained by the evidence, and were contrary to law; and cites in support thereof the judgment of this court in the case of *Austin v. Tecumseh Nat. Bank*, 49 Neb. 412, a similar case, in which the creditor failed to recover judgment against the new corporation. But in that case the decision was based upon the ground that the petition failed to state a cause of action. It is unnecessary to review that case here. Suf-  
fice to say that the petition there held defective failed to recite certain necessary allegations regarding the nature of the interests acquired by the new corporation; and such defects do not appear in the petition filed by the plaintiff herein. In that case it is held that, to render a new corporation liable in such cases, "it should, in the absence of a special agreement, affirmatively appear from the pleadings and proofs that the transaction in question is fraudulent as to creditors of the old corporation, or that the circumstances attending the creation of the new and its succession to the business and property of the old corporation are of such character as to warrant the finding that it is a mere continuation of the former." In the case at bar the pleadings clearly alleged, and the proof sus-  
tained them, that the corporation succeeded to the busi-  
ness and property of the Shiverick copartnership, and that the object of the promoters of the corporation was to free the copartnership from all indebtedness and to pre-  
vent their business failure. And the proof is sufficient to bring the case clearly within the rule announced in *Austin v. Tecumseh Nat. Bank*, *supra*, showing as it does that the corporation was simply a continuation of the co-  
partnership. It is a rule of the common law that a cor-  
poration which succeeds to the business of a copartnership, or a corporation, organized for the purpose of continuing the business, and takes over the assets thereof, by so doing assumes the debts and liabilities of the partnership or cor-  
poration which it succeeds, to the extent of the property so

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received. 2 Cook, Stock and Stockholders (3d ed.), sec. 671; 1 Beach, Private Corporations, sec. 360; *Evans v. Exchange Bank*, 79 Mo. 182; 2 Cook, Corporations (5th ed.), sec. 673; *Austin v. Tecumseh Nat. Bank, supra*; *Reed Bros. Co. v. First Nat. Bank*, 46 Neb. 175.

There was some conflict of evidence as to the value of the property, but as it is not shown that the property was consumed in the payment of the debts of the partnership firm, we cannot see what difference it makes whether the property was worth \$15,000, as claimed by the plaintiff in error, or a greater sum, as claimed by defendant in error.

Joseph L. Baker in the court below filed a petition for intervention, alleging that at the time of incorporation the Shivericks deceived him as to the value of the property; that he had no knowledge of the indebtedness owing to the plaintiff; that he was, when the suit was instituted, the owner of all the stock of the corporation, except ten shares assigned to other persons that they might act as directors. A demurrer to this petition was sustained. This ruling of the court the intervenor alleges is error, in his separate petition in error herein filed. Intervener did not allege fraud as against the plaintiff, and his petition stated no defense to the plaintiff's cause of action, nor any reasons why he should be made a party to the suit. The liability of the corporation existed the instant of its creation; the stockholders knew of the liability owing to plaintiff, and assignees of stock cannot interpose as a defense to plaintiff's action that the stockholders were guilty of deceit or fraud in the sale of such stock.

There is no error in the record, and we recommend that the judgment of the court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons appearing in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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The following opinion on rehearing was filed March 7, 1907. *Judgment of affirmance vacated and judgment of district court reversed.*\*

1. Corporation: SUCCEEDING TO ASSETS OF FIRM: LIABILITY. To render a newly organized corporation liable for the debts of an established corporation or firm to whose business and property it has succeeded, it should, in the absence of a special agreement to assume such liabilities, affirmatively appear from the pleadings and proofs that the transaction in question is fraudulent as to creditors, or that the circumstances attending the creation of the new and its succession to the business and property of the old corporation or partnership are of such character as to warrant the finding that it is a mere continuation of the old firm or corporation.
2. ——: ——. Where a corporation is organized by the members of an existing partnership and a third person, who contributes the funds necessary to properly finance the new enterprise, and receives therefor his agreed proportionate share of its capital stock, the partners contributing thereto the stock in trade, bills receivable and real estate of the firm, for which they receive their proportionate share of such capital stock, in the absence of fraud, the new corporation cannot be said to be a mere continuation of the old firm.
3. ——: ——: GOOD FAITH. If the new corporation takes all of the property of the old corporation or partnership, and pays for same entirely in its stock issued to the stockholders of the old corporation or members of the former partnership, the creditors of the former partnership or corporation may enforce their claims in equity against the interests of the former partners or stockholders, and a court of equity will seize such property rights in the hands of fraudulent grantees, as in other cases of fraudulent transfer of property, but an innocent purchaser in good faith, without notice, will be protected. A stockholder in the new corporation may be an innocent purchaser.

BARNES, J.

This is a suit in the nature of a creditor's bill to charge the Baker Furniture Company with the payment of a debt due from Arthur Shiverick and Ella C. Shiverick, as the Shiverick Furniture Company, to one R. S. Hall. The

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\* Rehearing denied. See opinion, p. 101, *post*.

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plaintiff had judgment in the district court, and the defendants brought the case here by a petition in error. By our former opinion, *ante*, p. 88, the judgment of the trial court was affirmed. A rehearing has been had, and the case again demands our consideration.

The facts underlying this controversy, briefly stated, are as follows: In the month of October, 1899, Arthur Shiverick and Ella C. Shiverick were, and for many years theretofore had been, conducting a general retail furniture business in the city of Omaha, as copartners, under the firm name and style of Charles Shiverick & Company. At the date mentioned the partnership was indebted to the intervener, Joseph L. Baker, in the sum of \$5,700 for borrowed money. The Shivericks at that time represented to Baker that the firm was financially embarrassed; that its assets consisted of a stock of furniture, worth from \$12,000 to \$15,000, and certain real estate situated in the city of Omaha, of the value of about \$7,000; that the obligations of the partnership consisted of \$27,000 owing to certain of their relatives; \$34,000 to the First National Bank of Omaha, and \$6,100 to persons and firms from whom the partnership had bought goods. It was proposed to Baker to form a corporation to be properly financed by him for the purpose of taking over and conducting the business; that such a business could be conducted with great profit; and it was represented to Baker that the relatives of Shivericks would forgive the debt due them. The First National Bank was thereupon consulted, and it was ascertained that that institution, in consideration of a cash payment of \$5,000, and the execution of new notes to the amount of \$10,000 by Arthur Shiverick, and Ella C. Shiverick, secured by a mortgage upon certain lands owned by Ella C. Shiverick at San Antonio, Texas, would forgive the balance of its indebtedness. Thereupon Baker and the bank required the Shivericks to make a written statement of the indebtedness of the firm, so that provision could be made to liquidate the same and thus start the business, which was to be taken over

and conducted by the proposed corporation, without debt and on a cash basis. This was supposed to have been done, and thereupon it was agreed between Baker and the Shivericks to organize a corporation to be known as the Shiverick Furniture Company, with a capital stock of \$50,000. The Shivericks were to transfer their stock of furniture, bills receivable, and Omaha real estate, of the supposed value of about \$25,000, to the corporation; and Baker agreed to pay to the Shivericks, or the First National Bank of Omaha, \$5,000 in cash, to advance to the Shivericks \$5,000 more, with which to pay their merchandise indebtedness, together with such other sums as might be necessary for that purpose; to also advance to Ella C. Shiverick about \$1,000, and forgive the debt due him from the firm amounting to something over \$5,700, as his contribution to the new enterprise. This arrangement was consummated, and it appears that at the time the corporation was formed all of its capital stock, except one share, was issued to the Shivericks; but in order to carry out the terms of the agreement 385 shares thereof were immediately transferred to Baker as his share of such capital stock, the remainder being retained by the Shivericks in payment for the property which they transferred to the corporation. The business from that time forward was conducted by Arthur Shiverick, as secretary, treasurer and manager of the corporation, Baker being its president, and Ella C. Shiverick its vice-president. To induce Baker to purchase the stock and join in creating the corporation, the Shivericks entered into a contract with him in writing, whereby they guaranteed that he should receive a dividend of 10 per cent. per annum on \$25,000 worth of the capital stock so purchased by him; and he in turn gave them an agreement by which they had the right to repurchase all of the capital stock assigned to him in excess of the sum of \$25,000 at the price at which it was sold to him, at any time within three years after the organization of the corporation. The Shivericks, to secure the fulfillment of this contract and

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also as collateral security for individual loans subsequently made to them by Baker, pledged to him stock owned by them to the amount of \$11,500. The business of the corporation under the management of Arthur Shiverick was not successful. It appears that no dividends were earned or paid upon the stock; the contract with the Shivericks respecting the payment of their \$10,000 in notes to the First National Bank was not carried out by them; no payments at all being made thereon. The result was that suits were brought by the bank against the Shivericks; judgments were recovered, and to protect the credit of the corporation in which Baker was so largely interested he was compelled to and did purchase the judgments above mentioned. He thereupon procured an amendment of the articles of incorporation, and increased the board of directors, and during the year 1902 took over the management of the business of the corporation; brought suit in the district court for Douglas county upon his claims against the Shivericks to enforce his lien upon the stock held by him as collateral; recovered judgment against them, and had a decree entered for the sale of the shares of stock so held by him as collateral. These shares were sold by the sheriff of Douglas county pursuant to the decree, and were purchased by Baker, who thereupon reorganized the corporation in the name of the Baker Furniture Company.

It now appears that Richard S. Hall, the plaintiff in the court below, had loaned \$6,000 to Arthur Shiverick and Ella C. Shiverick, a number of years before the date of the organization of the corporation, and at that time he held their note for that amount. Hall had theretofore been counsel for the Shivericks, and was advised of the facts relating to the formation of the corporation, at the time, or within a few days after, the transaction occurred. Hall's note was not included by the Shivericks in the statement of their indebtedness made to Baker and the bank, and Baker knew nothing about the matter until more than two and one-half years thereafter. Hall testified on the

trial of this case that he knew of the organization of the corporation; that he made no effort to procure the payment of his note at that time, because he trusted to the promise of Arthur Shiverick to pay it out of the salary he was to receive as manager for the corporation. However, on the 24th day of May, 1902, some two and a half years after the corporation had been organized and the partnership property had been conveyed to it, Hall advised Baker of the fact that he held the note above mentioned, purporting to have been signed by Charles Shiverick & Company and Arthur Shiverick on the 14th day of April, 1892, some ten years before that time, and that the note, with interest thereon for about two years, had not been paid. Thereafter, Hall brought suit in the district court for Douglas county against Arthur Shiverick and Ella C. Shiverick on said note, and on the same day they appeared in open court, waived the issuance and service of summons, and confessed judgment in his favor for the sum of \$6,997.60 as against themselves, and as partners doing business under the firm name and style of Charles Shiverick & Company, and agreed that the judgment should bear interest at the rate of 8 per cent. per annum from the date of its rendition.

At the January, 1903, meeting of the stockholders of the Shiverick Furniture Company its articles of incorporation were amended, and the name of the corporation was changed from Shiverick Furniture Company to Baker Furniture Company. On the 23d day of July, of that year, Hall instituted this suit against the Baker Furniture Company, and recovered judgment as above stated. It seems clear that the transaction in question herein was not fraudulent as to the creditors of the Shiverick Furniture Company. Indeed, Baker and the bank insisted that all claims against the partnership should be adjusted and settled, and that was one of the conditions on which Baker agreed to become one of the incorporators. It appears that Hall, knowing all about the transaction at or about the time it occurred, failed to inform Baker of the existence

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of his note, and accepted the promise of Arthur Shiverick to pay the same out of the salary he was to receive from the new corporation. It is true that the Shivericks, who owned the property and business of the copartnership at the time that Baker helped organize the new company, continued thereafter to also have an interest in the business through the stock which they had retained in the corporation. This interest which they had in the copartnership was, of course, an interest in the property of the copartnership, and they still retained and continued to hold an interest in the same property, and Baker is now claiming that it is free from the claim of Hall, who could, of course, have satisfied his claim out of the property while the partnership held it. We think it follows that a court of equity would reach any interest that the Shivericks had in the property at the time the proceedings in equity were begun, and it may be that Baker could not purchase the interest of the Shivericks in the corporate property, so as to be an innocent purchaser for value, after he had notice of the outstanding claims of this plaintiff against the property. *Montgomery Web Co. v. Dienelt*, 133 Pa. St. 585; *Hibernia Ins. Co. v. St. Louis & New Orleans T. Co.*, 13 Fed. 516. It was said in the latter case:

"Equity will not compel the creditor of a corporation to waive his right to enforce his claim against the visible and tangible property of the corporation, and to run the chances of following and recovering the value of shares of stock after they are placed upon the market."

This possibly might depend upon the circumstances in the case. If the court could do complete equity by impounding the shares of stock held by the Shivericks, there would seem to be no necessity of interfering with the property of the corporation. The corporation itself would, of course, be a proper party to such proceedings in equity, and a court of equity should, in view of all the circumstances in the case, frame its decree so as to do equity to the parties and to make its relief effective.

Since the plaintiff Baker acted in good faith in the

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formation of the corporation and in investing his money therein, it becomes important to inquire what interest the Shivericks had in this corporate property at the time that Baker had notice of the claims of the plaintiff Hall. This is especially so since the plaintiff purposely failed to notify Baker of his claim against the Shivericks, and allowed him to deal with the Shivericks and with the property in question upon the supposition that all claims against the property had been fully satisfied. There is a conflict in the evidence as to the value of the property which the new corporation took from the Shivericks. There is much evidence tending to show that the total value of all the assets of the Shivericks' copartnership which were taken by the corporation amounted to less than \$18,000, and that Baker invested at the time the amount of \$17,700, and afterwards paid \$1,200 for the judgment against the Shivericks, making a total of \$18,900, all of which was done by Baker before he had notice of the outstanding claim of the plaintiff Hall. Whatever the facts may have been in this regard, it is clear that neither at the time that Baker had notice of the claim of Hall, nor at the time that this action was begun, did the Shivericks have any interest in the property of the corporation to the amount of the judgment which was rendered by the court below in favor of the plaintiff Hall. Again, it cannot be said that the corporation assumed and agreed to pay the debts of the partnership, for such debts, as far as they were known or could be ascertained, were either paid or compounded and released before the corporation was formed. So if the Baker Furniture Company is liable to the plaintiff at all, it is made so because the transaction was merely a continuation of the old partnership of Charles Shiverick & Company.

In our former opinion that fact seems to have been assumed, but we now think the assumption was not warranted by the evidence. An examination of the record discloses that Baker contributed to the new enterprise his own claim of \$5,700; \$5,000 in cash paid to the First Na-

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tional Bank of Omaha, \$5,000 to the merchandise creditors of the firm, together with about \$1,000 advanced to Ella C. Shiverick, in all about \$16,700. For this he received what was understood to be his proportionate share of the capital stock of the new corporation. It was Baker's capital which financed the new corporation and brought it into existence. Without such capital the adjustment of such large accounts with the prior creditors of the partnership could not have been made, and no steps could have been taken to further the organization of the new company. Again, the members of the old partnership were Arthur Shiverick, Ella C. Shiverick, and no others, while the new corporation was composed of Joseph L. Baker, Arthur Shiverick and Ella C. Shiverick, together with two other persons, who later on became stockholders therein. To this new corporation the old partnership contributed its stock of furniture, its bills receivable, and certain real estate situated in the city of Omaha, for which its members received their proportionate share of the capital stock of such corporation. When the corporation was formed a new entity was created which engaged in the furniture business, but it cannot be said that the transaction was, in fact, a continuation of the old partnership. *Paxton v. Bacon Hill & Mining Co.*, 2 Nev. 257; *Austin v. Tecumseh Nat. Bank*, 49 Neb. 412.

The fact that Baker became the owner of the shares of capital stock issued to the Shivericks, and reorganized the corporation under the name of the Baker Furniture Company, is strenuously urged as a reason for affirming the judgment of the trial court. It must be remembered, however, that the Shiverick stock was purchased by Baker at a judicial sale; and the rule is well settled that by such purchase he incurred no liability for the debts of either the partnership or the corporation. *Armour v. Cement's Sons*, 123 Fed. 56, 62 C. C. A. 142; *Fernschild v. Yuengling Brewing Co.*, 154 N. Y. 667; *Allen v. North Des Moines M. E. Church*, 127 Ia. 96; *Smith v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.*, 18 Wis. 21; *Vilas v. Milwaukee & P. du C. R. Co.*, 17 Wis.

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513; *Wiggins Ferry Co. v. Ohio & M. R. Co.*, 142 U. S. 396.

The evidence contained in the record is not sufficient to support the judgment of the district court. Our former judgment is vacated, and the judgment of the district court reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings, not inconsistent with this opinion.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on motion for rehearing was filed October 3, 1907. *Rehearing denied:*

PER CURIAM.

In the former opinion the following language was used: "If the Baker Furniture Company is liable to the plaintiff at all, it is made so because the transaction was merely a continuation of the old partnership of Charles Shiverick & Company."

This language is not strictly accurate, and from the briefs upon the motion for rehearing it appears that it has led to a misunderstanding of the views of the court. From other portions of the opinion it is made clear that any interest that the members of the original firm of Charles Shiverick & Company had in the partnership property at the time this action was begun could be reached in this action to satisfy the existing claim of Hall against the copartnership of Charles Shiverick & Company. The plaintiff was entitled to subject the interests of the members of the former copartnership in the copartnership property to the payment of his claim, whether that interest was represented by shares of stock or otherwise, and after notice of plaintiff's claim the defendant Baker could not deal directly with the Shivericks for the purchase of their interests, if such transaction would result in enabling the Shivericks to hinder or delay the plaintiff in collecting his claim out of the interests of the former copartnership in the property.

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We think the conclusion reached is right, and the motion for rehearing is

**OVERRULED.**

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**ADAM HABIG v. CHARLES B. PARKER.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 13,969.

1. **Pleading: CAUSE OF ACTION.** A petition setting up numerous and continued trespasses to personal property states but one cause of action, and is not subject to a motion to divide and number.
2. ———: **DAMAGES.** It is unnecessary in most actions where the demand is unliquidated and sounds wholly in damages, and where there is but a single cause of action, to state specifically and in amounts the different elements or items which go to make up the sum total of the damages. It is enough generally to claim so much in gross as damages for the wrongs done. In case, however, the pleader elects to claim a named sum for any one or more of the items of claimed damages, he is restricted in his recovery on these items to the amount named in his petition, and the court should so charge.
3. **Instruction: HARMLESS ERROR.** It is not reversible error to charge that the measure of damages for injury to or destruction of bearing fruit trees is the market value of such trees, where the party complaining tendered and procured the court to give an instruction stating the same rule of damages.

ERROR to the district court for Nemaha county: ALBERT H. BABCOCK, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Neal & Quackenbush, for plaintiff in error.*

*Edgar Ferneau, contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

Parker sued Habig for trespass alleged to have been committed by Habig's stock upon his cultivated lands. The allegations of the petition covered a period of three years, charging repeated acts of trespass during all of that time, and the paragraph of the petition relating to the damage claimed is in the following words: "That the hogs of said

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defendant, which he so permitted to run at large and over and upon the cultivated lands of this plaintiff during the year 1900, the exact dates in said year the plaintiff is unable to give, ate up, run over and destroyed corn and corn fodder of this plaintiff to the value of \$7.20; that during the year 1901, the exact dates the plaintiff is unable to give, the said hogs of the defendant ate up, and run over and destroyed corn and corn fodder of this plaintiff to the value of \$7.20; that during the year 1902, the exact dates in said year this plaintiff is unable to give, the said hogs of defendant ate up, run over, damaged and destroyed corn and corn fodder, apples and pasture and damaged the apple trees of this plaintiff to the amount of \$135. That the plaintiff has, therefore, been damaged by the stock of the said defendant, and which said defendant permitted to run at large over and upon the cultivated lands of this plaintiff at the times hereinbefore stated, in the total sum of \$149.70; that no part of said amount has been paid by the defendant to this plaintiff." Habig moved for a more specific statement in the petition, the motion being as follows: "Comes now the above named defendant, and moves the court to require the plaintiff herein to separately state and number the causes of his action set forth in his petition, and further to make his petition more definite and certain by, first, setting out the amount, quantity and kind of the personal property damaged or destroyed for the year 1900, and the amount of damages to each kind of property; second, that he segregate the injuries and damages to real and personal property in the year 1902, and that he set forth the amount, quantity and kind of personal property injured or damaged during said year, and the amount of damages to pasture and apple trees, and set forth the nature and the amount of damages to each." This motion was overruled by the court and error is alleged thereon.

We think that reversible error cannot be predicated on this ruling of the court, as, in our opinion, the petition contained but one cause of action. The petition charges

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numerous and repeated acts of trespass, and, in effect, a continuing trespass. The general rule applicable to a complaint in an action of trespass is stated in 21 Ency. Pl. & Pr. p. 812, as follows: "Where a trespass has been continued without intermission for a longer time than the space of one day or has been repeated on a subsequent day, the party injured may recover in one action for the first act of trespass and in another for the continuance or repetition thereof; but he is not under the necessity of bringing two actions in either case, because he may in one action, by declaring with a *continuendo*, recover for the first trespass and also for the continuance or repetition thereof." And this rule is by the authorities as applicable to actions for trespass to personal property as upon real estate. *Folger v. Fields*, 12 Cush. (Mass.) 93. There was no error in overruling the defendant's motion so far as it asked that the plaintiff be required to separately state and number his causes of action.

Relating to the other assignments of the motion, the law is well settled that it is unnecessary in most actions where the demand is unliquidated and sounds wholly in damages, and where there is but a single cause of action, to state specifically and in separate paragraphs the different elements or items which go to make up the sum total of damages. It is enough to claim so much in gross as damages for the wrong done. *Shepherd v. Pratt*, 16 Kan. 209; 2 Sutherland, Damages (3d ed.), sec. 424. While it is usual, and perhaps the better practice, to grant a motion requiring the plaintiff to itemize the damages claimed for injury to different articles of personal property, there was no reversible error in denying the motion in this case, especially as the case had been first tried in the county court, and defendant was fully informed upon that trial of the plaintiff's claim. The evidence offered by the plaintiff tended to show that the defendant's hogs, to the number of about 30 or 40, trespassed upon plaintiff's cultivated lands on numerous occasions during the years 1900, 1901 and 1902; that they ate and destroyed certain corn

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and corn fodder, quite a quantity of apples, and, as a result of the trespass, five of his apple trees died and other of the trees were injured. Evidence was offered to show the value of the five dead trees, but no evidence was offered as to the value of the other trees prior to the injury and their value after the injury occurred.

The court instructed the jury, at the request of plaintiff, "that the measure of the plaintiff's damages is the reasonable market value of the property destroyed at the time the same was destroyed by the defendant's stock running at large." It is urged that this instruction is erroneous and prejudicial. It is disclosed, however, by the record that in instruction No. 2, given by the court at the defendant's request, the same measure of damage was applied, the language being: "The measure of the plaintiff's damages and his recovery therefor, in this case the property destroyed, would be the fair and reasonable market value of such property at the time, and located at the place, in the same condition that said property was in at the time it was destroyed." It will be observed at once by a comparison of the two instructions that both parties had the same theory as to the measure of damages, and that the court adopted the theory of the parties themselves. The rule is well established in this state that where parties have tried a case upon a certain theory, and procured the trial court to adopt that theory, they cannot be permitted to change their position in the appellate court on error.

The questions already discussed are the principal and most important ones presented. There are 53 assignments of error in the petition. The case, however, is not of sufficient importance to justify extending this opinion by separate mention of each. We have examined the record with care, and conclude that the case was fairly tried upon the theory adopted by the parties, and find no prejudicial error.

It is recommended, therefore, that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

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Gray v. Nolde.

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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JAMES A. GRAY v. JOHN NOLDE.

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,166.

**Vendor and Purchaser: Rescission: Possession.** Gray purchased from Nolde 160 acres of land at the agreed price of \$6,000, \$1,000 of which was paid in cash, the remainder to be paid at Gray's option with 6 per cent. interest, payable annually. Some three years after the date of purchase Gray tendered to Nolde the remainder of the purchase price with the accrued interest, and demanded a deed, which was refused, and he thereupon commenced an action to recover the purchase money paid and the increased value of the land, and recovered judgment for about \$3,000. Nolde superseded this judgment and appealed therefrom to the supreme court. While the action was pending in this court, Nolde commenced an action against Gray to recover possession of the land (Gray still remaining in possession), and for the rents and profits. He recovered judgment for the possession and \$825 damages, from which this appeal was taken by Gray. *Held*, That if Nolde had submitted to the judgment obtained against him by Gray and satisfied the same he would be entitled to possession of the land, but that having appealed from the judgment, and refusing to recognize it as settling their rights relating to the land, he could not use it to oust Gray from possession.

**ERROR to the district court for Clay county: LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. Reversed.**

*L. B. Stiner and Tibbets Bros. & Morey*, for plaintiff in error.

*L. J. Capps, C. H. Sloan, F. W. Sloan and J. P. A. Black*, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

In May, 1901, Gray, plaintiff in error, entered into a written contract with Nolde, defendant in error, for the

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purchase of a quarter section of land in Clay county, Nebraska. The agreed purchase price was \$6,000, \$1,000 of which was paid on the making of the contract, the remaining \$5,000 to be paid at the option of Gray with 6 per cent. interest until payment was made. Gray thereupon entered into the possession of the purchased premises, and in February, 1903, tendered to Nolde \$5,000 and the accrued interest, and demanded a deed from Nolde and wife, which Nolde refused to execute. Thereupon, Gray commenced an action for damages, claiming that the land had advanced in value between the date of his purchase and his demand for a deed to the amount of \$2,000. Upon a trial of the case he recovered judgment for \$2,969.63, being \$1,000 paid on the purchase price, and the enhanced value of the land as found by the jury. Nolde superseded the judgment and appealed to this court. While the case was pending in this court, Nolde commenced this action in ejectment to recover possession of the premises, and the rents and profits received by Gray during his possession. The trial resulted in a judgment for the plaintiff for possession of the land and \$825 damages, and costs, from which judgment Gray has appealed to this court.

The defendant in error insists that by suing at law for the consideration paid on the contract and for his damages sustained because of Nolde's refusal to make a deed of the premises, Gray has in law effected a rescission of the contract of purchase and is no longer entitled to possession of the land. Had Nolde satisfied the judgment for damages obtained against him, there would be force in this contention. Gray should not have both the land and damages for a failure to convey. This court so held on the appeal of *Nolde v. Gray*, 73 Neb. 373, 378. But Nolde refused to acquiesce in the judgment against him and to pay the same. He appealed therefrom, insisting that Gray's neglect to surrender possession, and put him *in statu quo* before commencing the suit, was a complete defense to the action, and he procured the judgment of

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this court to that effect. If Gray could not hold the land under his contract and also a judgment for damages on account of a breach thereof, neither can Nolde hold Gray's money paid on the contract and oust him from his possession. The rule must be reciprocal and operate alike upon both parties. Neither can claim a rescission and at the same time lay fast to what the contract has given him. In an action by the grantee against his grantor for breach of covenant, the rule appears to be well settled that if the grantee recover and receive from his grantor the full consideration price, with interest, such grantor is thereby remitted to his right and title to the granted premises as he held them before he granted them away, and the grantee is estopped by such judgment and the payment thereof to set up his title deed against his grantor. *Porter v. Hill*, 9 Miss. \*34; *Stinson v. Sumner*, 9 Mass. \*143; *Blanchard v. Ellis*, 1 Gray (Mass.), 195; *Parker v. Brown*, 15 N. H. 176; *Kinkaid v. Brittain*, 5 Snead (Tenn.), 119. The same rule should be applied between vendor and vendee in a contract for the sale of real estate, where the vendor has paid part of the purchase money and becomes vested with the equitable title. Instead of satisfying the judgment for damages against him and then demanding possession, Nolde refused to acquiesce in the judgment, insisting that it was wrongfully obtained, and at the same time, by bringing this action, asserts that it was rightfully given and seeks to use it as the means of regaining possession of his property. He cannot, while denying the validity of the judgment and prosecuting an appeal to have it set aside, use it as an instrument of warfare to eject his vendee from possession, and to recover rents and profits.

We recommend a reversal of the judgment, and a dismissal of the action without prejudice to the commencement of another action, if conditions warrant.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

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Abrams v. Taintor.

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed, and the action dismissed without prejudice to the commencement of another action, if conditions warrant.

REVERSED.

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**HARVEY M. ABRAMS, APPELLANT, v. HIRAM C. TAINTOR ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,178.

1. **Mortgage Foreclosure: TRUSTEE.** A mortgage made to a trustee may be foreclosed by him without joining the beneficiary as a plaintiff.
2. **—: REVIVOR.** Where the beneficiary is made a coplaintiff with the trustee in a foreclosure action, and dies while the suit is pending, irregularity or error in reviving the suit in the name of his administrator is without prejudice to further proceedings in the case, as he was not a necessary party plaintiff.
3. **—: ADVERSE POSSESSION.** A mortgagor's possession of the mortgaged premises after foreclosure and sale will not become adverse until notice to the purchaser that he is holding in hostility to his title.

APPEAL from the district court for Knox county. JOHN F. BOYD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*W. A. Meserve and E. A. Houston, for appellant.*

*J. H. Berryman, O. W. Rice and Charles B. Keller, contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

October 1, 1887, Harvey M. Abrams, the appellant, borrowed \$3,300 and to secure payment thereof executed a mortgage upon the premises in controversy in this action maturing October 1, 1892. The mortgage ran to L. W. Tulleys, trustee. At the same time he executed to Burn-

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ham, Tulleys & Co., the agents through whom the loan was obtained, a second mortgage on the same premises to secure the sum of \$330, the amount of their commission. This mortgage matured before the first mortgage and, not being paid when due, Burnham, Tulleys & Co. commenced an action to foreclose the same, which went to decree October 21, 1890. The premises were thereafter sold under the decree and a sheriff's deed issued to Burnham, Tulleys & Co., bearing date January 6, 1892. While L. W. Tulleys, trustee, was made a party defendant in the action, no right which he held under the mortgage was attempted to be cut off or foreclosed, the decree reciting "that the equity of redemption of the defendants, and each and all of them, except L. W. Tulleys, trustee, be foreclosed and forever barred, and said mortgaged premises shall be sold and an order of sale shall issue to the sheriff of Knox county, Nebraska, after the expiration of three months from date, commanding him to sell the real estate above described as upon execution, subject to the lien existing in favor of L. W. Tulleys, trustee, and bring the proceeds thereof into court to be applied in satisfaction of the sum so found due." No possession of the premises was taken under the deed issued in this case. The note secured by the first mortgage was indorsed to Hiram H. Taintor, and in July, 1893, L. W. Tulleys' trustee, and Hiram H. Taintor, beneficiary, commenced an action to foreclose the first mortgage, making Harvey M. Abrams and wife, Burnham, Tulleys & Co., and other parties claiming to have some interest in the land, parties defendant. This action went to decree May 22, 1894. From the evidence produced upon the trial of the case at bar, it appears that Hiram H. Taintor, one of the plaintiffs in the action, died in March, 1894, previous to the entry of the decree, and on September 24, 1894, the action was revived in the name of Hiram C. Taintor, administrator of his estate. No conditional order of reviver was made and served upon the defendants in the action, nor was any supplemental pleading filed by the admini-

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istrator, but upon the suggestion of the death of Hiram H. Taintor the court forthwith entered an order reviving the action. The mortgaged premises were sold under the decree and bid in by Hiram C. Taintor, assignee, and a sheriff's deed duly issued, bearing date November 2, 1895. No possession of the premises was ever taken under this deed, and Abrams, the mortgagor, has at all times remained in possession of the premises. In 1901 plaintiff and appellant commenced this action to quiet his title to the premises, basing his claim upon adverse possession for more than ten years. Burnham, Tulleys & Co. answered the petition, in effect disclaiming any interest in the premises since the making of the sheriff's deed to Hiram C. Taintor. Taintor filed an answer and cross-petition asking that the title be quieted in him and that he be awarded a right of possession. From a decree quieting title in the defendant Taintor, the plaintiff has appealed.

On the submission of the case, appellant abandoned his claim to have title quieted in him, but he insists that the court erred in quieting title in defendant Taintor, and urges that the foreclosure proceedings, under which Taintor obtained a sheriff's deed to the premises, were void on account of the death of Hiram H. Taintor, one of the original parties in the foreclosure proceeding, and the revival of the action in the name of Hiram C. Taintor without notice of any kind to any of the defendants in the action, and without any appearance on the part of any of the defendants. It may be conceded, for the purposes of this case, that the court erred in reviving the action without notice to the defendants, but, if Hiram H. Taintor was not a necessary party to the action, then such error was without prejudice and would not invalidate the further proceedings in the case. It will be remembered that the mortgage in that case ran to L. W. Tulleys, trustee, and that L. W. Tulleys, trustee, was a party plaintiff to the foreclosure proceeding. While Hiram H. Taintor, the beneficiary, was also made a plaintiff, and while he

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was a proper party, we do not think that he was a necessary party plaintiff in the case. Section 32 of the code is as follows: "An executor, administrator, guardian, trustee of an express trust, a person with whom or in whose name a contract is made for the benefit of another, or a person expressly authorized by statute, may bring an action without joining with him the person for whose benefit it is prosecuted. Officers may sue and be sued in such name as is authorized by law, and official bonds may be sued upon in the same way." In *Hays v. Galion Gas Light and Coal Co.*, 29 Ohio St. 330, the question was before the supreme court of Ohio, and, speaking of the right of the trustee to foreclose a mortgage without joining the beneficiaries, it was there said:

"Whether the owners of the debt, or beneficiaries under the trust, are numerous or not, he may so act or sue without uniting with him those for whose benefit the action is prosecuted. Code, sec. 27; *Coe v. Columbus, P. & I. R. Co.*, 10 Ohio St. 372; Pomeroy, Code Remedies, sec. 174."

To the same effect is Wiltsie, Mortgage Foreclosures, sec. 110. It is true that in some jurisdictions it has been held that, where the trust is merely nominal, it is necessary for the trustee to join with him as coplaintiffs the *cestuis que trust*, except in those cases where the beneficiaries are numerous, as in the case of mortgages to secure railroad and other bonds; but we prefer to follow the decision of the Ohio court based on a statute similar to, if not identical with, section 32 above quoted. Hiram H. Taintor not being a necessary party to the foreclosure proceedings, it was unnecessary to revive the action as to him, as it could still proceed in the name of Tulley's, trustee, and any error in the proceedings to revive were without prejudice.

If we understand the theory of the plaintiff and appellant, it is that, having held possession of the premises for more than ten years after the deed issued to Burnham, Tulley's & Co. under their foreclosure, he has ac-

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quired title by adverse possession. In his brief it is said: "We contend that even if the foreclosure of the \$3,300 mortgage was valid the legal effect thereof would not arrest the running of the statute of limitations in favor of appellant, as the result of said action was merely a conveyance by process of law of the title from Burnham, Tulleys & Co. to Hiram C. Taintor, and its effect would be no greater than a deed executed." There are two reasons why we cannot agree with this contention: First. The law appears to be well settled that possession by the mortgagor, after foreclosure and sale under the mortgage, is not adverse to the purchaser at the foreclosure sale until actual notice of an adverse holding is brought home to the purchaser. In *Root v. Woolworth*, 150 U. S. 401, 415, the court, discussing this question, say:

"If, since that decree, he has inclosed a part of the land, cut wood from it, or cultivated it, he would be treated and considered as holding it in subordination to the title of Morton and his privy in estate, until he gave notice that his holding was adverse, and in the assertion of actual ownership in himself. \* \* \* Without such notice the length of time intervening between the decree and the institution of the present suit would give him no better right than he previously possessed, and his holding possession would, under the authorities, be treated as in subordination to the title of the real owner. This is a well-established rule."

Numerous cases from different states are cited by the court in support of this proposition. Under this rule the plaintiff's possession was not adverse, even as against Burnham, Tulleys & Co., as the record nowhere discloses any notice brought home to them that the plaintiff was in possession claiming adversely to them. Second. Even though the statute were held to run as against Burnham, Tulleys & Co. on account of the plaintiff's continued possession of the premises, it would not commence running against Taintor before his mortgage was barred. So long as he may maintain an action on his mortgage,

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he has a right to call upon the court to foreclose and order a sale and the delivery of the possession, regardless of the length of possession by the mortgagor or the claim under which possession was held. As stated by appellee, if the statute could be started in the manner claimed by appellant, then one giving a long time mortgage might take a second, due at an early date, have foreclosure proceedings instituted and the premises bid in, and in this way bar the first mortgagee, even before the maturity of his claim. The law is not so inconsiderate of the rights of a creditor.

The district court was undoubtedly right in entering the decree which it did, and we recommend its affirmance.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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ELIJAH M. TOPLIFF, TRUSTEE, APPELLEE, v. JOHN A. RICHARDSON ET AL., APPELLANTS.

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. Nos. 14,186, 14,187.

1. Service by publication was attempted on three defendants. Two of the defendants were residents of the state, and the third, a nonresident, had died previous to the publication of the notice. *Held*, That a decree entered on such attempted service was void.
2. Estates: MERGER. There can be no merger unless a greater and a less estate meet in the same person holding in the same right, nor where intervening rights or estates interfere, nor where the intention to keep the estates distinct may be inferred or has been expressed.
3. Proof of the statute of a sister state and of a judicial record appointing trustees examined, and *held* sufficient.
4. Tax Sale: TITLE ACQUIRED. The title conveyed under a tax sale is not derivative, but a new title, and the purchaser, if his deed is

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valid, takes free from any incumbrance, claims or equities connected with the prior title.

5. **Judicial Sale: INCUMBRANCES: ESTOPPEL.** One purchasing at judicial sale is estopped from questioning the validity of an incumbrance shown by the appraisement and deducted from the appraised value of the estate sold, where he makes no objection to the validity of the incumbrance prior to the sale.

APPEAL from the district court for Kearney county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*J. L. McPheeley*, for appellants.

*Hall, Woods & Pound, Hague & Anderbery and H. J. Whitmore, contra.*

DUFFIE, C.

These two cases were, by stipulation of parties, heard upon one set of briefs, the facts in each case being nearly identical. The action was to foreclose a mortgage brought by Elijah M. Topliff, trustee. The New Hampshire Trust Company in March, 1894, issued its bonds in the sum of \$3,500,000, and as security for payment thereof deposited with Isaac W. Smith, Alfred T. Batchelder and Elijah M. Topliff, as trustees, notes and mortgages of about the face value of the bonds issued, the mortgage in suit being among the number. Previous to the bringing of this action two of said trustees, Smith and Batchelder, departed this life. The mortgage was made December 26, 1885, by Daniel Bender and wife to secure the payment of a note for \$700 maturing January 1, 1891, and payable to Hiram D. Upton or bearer. January 22, 1891, Bender secured an extension of the note and mortgage for the additional term of five years, this extension agreement not being put of record. In 1901 J. W. Whiffin & Son commenced an action in the district court for Kearney county to foreclose a tax lien held against the premises, and such proceedings were had in that case that on February 21, 1902, a sheriff's deed was issued, on the decree foreclosing the tax lien, to

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the appellant John A. Richardson, who now claims to be the owner in fee of the mortgaged premises under said sheriff's deed. In that action Daniel Bender and Ida M. Bender, the mortgagors, were made parties defendant as owners of the fee, and Hiram D. Upton was made a defendant as holder of the mortgage lien. Service was had on all the defendants by publication and it developed upon the trial of the case at bar that Upton died prior to the commencement of the tax foreclosure case, and that Bender and wife were residents of this state. In this condition of the case it is clear that the court acquired no jurisdiction against the parties, the authorities all agreeing that, if the party sued was dead at and prior to the date of the pretended service, there can be no valid decree. *Loring v. Folger*, 7 Gray (Mass.), 505; *Childers v. Schantz*, 120 Mo. 305; 1 Black, Judgments (2d ed.), sec. 203. The Benders being residents of the state, the court could not acquire jurisdiction over them on notice by publication. *Eayrs v. Nason*, 54 Neb. 143; *German Nat. Bank v. Kautter*, 55 Neb. 103; *Wood Harvester Co. v. Dobry*, 59 Neb. 590. The decree of the court being entered without jurisdiction of the defendants was absolutely void, and the deed to the appellant Richardson growing out of the proceedings confers on him no title.

It further appears from the evidence that one Jesse M. Dailey procured from Bender and wife a quitclaim deed to the mortgaged premises in July, 1897, and Dailey quitclaimed to the plaintiff Topliff in September, 1897. Appellant claims that, the fee of the premises having been conveyed and accepted by the mortgagee, a merger thereby occurs and the mortgage lien is thereby extinguished, for which reason the plaintiff's bill should be dismissed. Ordinarily this is true, but the law is well settled that when intervening rights interfere, or when the two estates meet, and it is necessary that the charge be kept on foot to protect those interests, the courts will not enforce a merger. Where there is a union of rights, equity will preserve them distinct, if the intention so to do is either expressed or im-

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plied. *Miller v. Finn*, 1 Neb. 254. The facts developed on the trial make it very apparent that the interest of the mortgagee was wholly adverse to a merger of the two estates. As before stated, one Jesse M. Dailey procured a deed from Bender and wife in July, 1897, and while his deed to Topliff was dated in September, 1897, that deed was not delivered to Topliff until shortly before its record on April 18, 1903, the reason being that Dailey claimed a certain sum as due from Topliff, over which there was a dispute which was not settled until about that date. In the meantime, and in January, 1902, Bender and wife made a new quitclaim deed to one E. C. Dailey. In his testimony Bender says that when he gave this new deed to E. C. Dailey the latter represented himself to be the agent of the parties to whom the original deed had been given, and that they had lost the papers; that he assured them that the parties were the same and that it was "all straight." E. C. Dailey, after getting this new deed from the Benders, conveyed to Ida M. Hollenbeck on March 6, 1902, and prior to the recording of the deed from Jesse M. Dailey to Topliff. It will be seen, therefore, that unless the mortgage was kept alive the interests of the mortgagee would be seriously affected by the conveyance from E. C. Dailey to Ida M. Hollenbeck.

One other matter might be noticed in relation to this claim of merger. Topliff holds the mortgage in question as trustee, while the deed from Jesse M. Dailey is made to Elijah M. Topliff. One of the essentials of a merger is that the two interests be held in the same right. *Clift v. White*, 12 N. Y. 519. Had Topliff intended a merger of the two estates, the presumption is that he would have required the deed to run to him in his capacity of trustee. Objection is further made that the act of the legislature incorporating the New Hampshire Trust Company is not sufficiently authenticated. The act is authenticated by the secretary of state of New Hampshire under the great seal of that state. This is sufficient under section 420 of the code. Appellant makes two objections to the

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proof of the order appointing trustees of the New Hampshire Trust Company: (1) That the certificate omits to certify to the order; (2) that it is not stated in the certificate of the justice of the supreme court attached to the clerk's seal that the order is in due form "in law." The certificate is in the following form: "I, Thomas D. Luce, clerk of the supreme court of the state of New Hampshire, for the county of Hillsboro, do hereby certify that the foregoing are true copies of the petition for, and order for the appointment of the trustees in the matter of the New Hampshire Trust Company, No. 855 Eq. (not including exhibits), and the bonds filed therein, with the approval of the court thereon." Receivers are often appointed by interlocutory orders as well as by final decrees of court, and we do not think it a good objection to the certificate that the clerk has used the word "order" instead of "decree." The certificate of the justice of the supreme court attached to that of the clerk certifies "that the foregoing certificate is in due form." The certificate is strictly in form with the federal statute, which requires that the certificate of the judge must be that the "attestation is in due form." *Grover v. Grover*, 30 Mo. 400. •

Some stress is laid on the fact that the agreement to extend the mortgage was not recorded, and that appellant bid in the land on the tax foreclosure relying on the records and believing that the mortgage lien was barred by lapse of time. There are several answers to this claim. As long as the mortgage remained uncanceled of record it was notice to everyone that the plaintiff might assert it in the future. Payments on the debt, of which no public record is required or could be made, would prevent the running of the statute, and this, of itself, was sufficient to require of a purchaser inquiry, which, if prosecuted with reasonable diligence, would have disclosed the true facts.

Again, the appellant claims title under a decree foreclosing a tax lien. The title conveyed under a tax sale is not derivative, but a new title in the nature of an independent grant by the sovereign authority, and the pur-

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chaser takes free from any incumbrances, claims or equities connected with the prior title. *Crum v. Cotting*, 22 Ia. 411. Had proper service been made to give the court jurisdiction in the tax foreclosure proceedings, the deed issued therein would have given appellant perfect title to the land and cut off every prior claim or equity existing against it. The appellant was not concerned with the record title to this land further than to see that the proper parties were made defendants in the tax foreclosure suit.

Another matter going to the inequity of the appellant's claim is this: When the land was appraised prior to the sale under the decree foreclosing the tax lien, the mortgage in controversy was deducted from the appraised value of the land, and the plaintiff bid not to exceed two-thirds of the appraisement, thus recognizing the validity of this mortgage lien and estopping himself, under our former decisions, from resisting its enforcement.

We have no doubt of the correctness of the decree foreclosing the mortgage, and recommend its affirmance.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree foreclosing the mortgage is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**HARRY A. SHUMAN ET AL., APPELLEES, v. A. HEATER,  
APPELLANT.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,192.

1. **Sale: WARRANTY.** No particular form of words is necessary to constitute a warranty as to the quality or soundness of chattels. Any form of words whereby a vendor, for the purpose of inducing a sale, makes affirmation pending the negotiations that the subject matter of the sale is of a particular quality or fitness will constitute a warranty, when relied upon by the purchaser.

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2. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to show: (1) That the defendant sold a team to the plaintiff; (2) that he warranted the team to be sound; (3) a breach of such warranty.

APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:  
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Morning & Ledwith*, for appellant.

*C. O. Whedon*, *contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

In their petition the plaintiffs charge that on the 14th day of May, 1904, the defendant sold and delivered a span of horses and set of harness to the plaintiff, Harry A. Shuman, for the agreed price of \$250, of which amount \$15 was paid at the time, the remainder to be paid according to the terms of several promissory notes of that date secured by chattel mortgage on the property included in the sale and other personal property. The notes and mortgage were executed by both parties plaintiff, who are husband and wife, to the defendant. The plaintiffs further charge that the plaintiff vendee bought said team for use in teaming, draying and transfer business, as his vendor at the time well knew, and that he was induced to buy the team by the defendant's false and fraudulent representations that the team was sound and fit in every way for the use thereof contemplated by the vendee; that neither of the horses belonging to said team was sound or fit for use for the purpose for which they were bought by the vendee, but were lame, diseased and unfit for work. The petition also contains averments to the effect that the vendee, immediately upon his discovery that the defendant's representations with respect to the team were false, tendered and returned the team and harness to the defendant, and demanded a return of the cash payment made at the time of the sale, and of the notes for the deferred payments and the cancelation of the mortgage

securing them. The defendant declined to rescind the sale, and the prayer of the petition is for judgment for the amount of the cash payment, a return of the notes and the cancelation of the mortgage, etc.

The theory of the defense is that at the time of the sale the team belonged to a third party who was indebted to the defendant in the sum of \$1,300, and whose indebtedness was secured by a chattel mortgage on the team and other property. That, in order to enable a third party to make the sale and the vendee to purchase the team, it was arranged that the defendant should release the mortgage of the third party as to this team, and that the vendee should pay the defendant \$15 and give him security for \$235 on the team and other personal property, and that the entire \$250 should be credited on the indebtedness of the third party to the defendant. The answer admits the payment of the \$15, the execution and delivery of the notes and the mortgage mentioned in the petition, and the plaintiff's tender of a return of the property. It also includes a cross-petition, praying for the foreclosure of the mortgage. The court found all the issues in favor of the plaintiffs and entered a decree accordingly. The defendant appeals.

It is first insisted that the evidence is insufficient to sustain a finding that the defendant sold the team to the vendee, one of the plaintiffs in the case. That was the principal question litigated in the case. The evidence bearing thereon covers the major portion of a bill of exceptions, consisting of more than 160 pages. On that question it must suffice to say that the vendee's testimony, to the effect that the defendant was the vendor of the team and harness, is flatly contradicted by the defendant. Both parties are to a certain extent corroborated by other witnesses and by facts and circumstances appearing in evidence. The witnesses were before the trial court, who was in a position to observe their appearance and demeanor while testifying, and in many other ways had a better opportunity to judge of their credibility than we,

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who have nothing to guide us but the written transcript of their evidence. But were we to be guided by that alone we are not prepared to say that we should arrive at a different conclusion than that reached below. On the contrary we are inclined to think our conclusion would be the same.

It is next contended that the evidence is insufficient to show that there was any warranty on the part of the defendant with respect to the condition of the team or its fitness for the work for which it was bought. The testimony of the plaintiff vendee upon this point, corroborated in many particulars, is as follows: "Well, of course, it is hard for me to remember all that he said, but I asked him, and explained very thoroughly, that I not only wanted the team for the job with the telephone people, as long as it lasted, to do that work with, when I was through with that I wanted to do dray work, also to run a storage room. He says the team is sound. I believe they are sound in every way, good for my work all the time; told me how nice a team they was, how strong; also spoke about having seen them pulling a building. I think we talked about them moving this building. Q. What did he say about their being sound? A. He said they was sound in every way, didn't know anything wrong with them. \* \* \* Q. Now, did you know the actual condition of that team prior to the time you bought it? A. No, I didn't. Q. Upon what did you rely on buying it? A. On what Mr. Heater told me. Q. What did he tell you? A. I asked him if the team was sound and fit for my work, and explained thoroughly. I told him I didn't expect to finish doing that telephone work—that was light work. If I got money enough to pay for them and was situated right, I wanted to put them on a van. Q. What did he say about their being fit? A. Said that was the very use they was adapted for. Wasn't made to trot, but they were draught horses. Q. He said they were sound? A. Yes, sir; said they were sound in every way. Q. Did you rely upon that statement in buying the team? A. I

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relied on him for everything. \* \* \* Q. Did you ever have a conversation with Mr. Ferdinand about buying this team from him? A. No, sir; I didn't."

No particular form of words is necessary to constitute a warranty as to the quality or soundness of chattels. Any form of words whereby a vendor, pending negotiations, for the purpose of inducing a purchase, makes affirmation that the subject matter of the proposed sale is of a particular quality or fitness will constitute a warranty, when relied upon by the purchaser. *Little v. Woodworth*, 8 Neb. 281; *Erskine v. Swanson*, 45 Neb. 767; *Unland v. Garton*, 48 Neb. 202. This case falls within the rule just stated, and we consider the evidence amply sufficient to sustain a finding of a warranty in the sale of the team.

Lastly, the defendant contends that the evidence is insufficient to sustain a finding of a breach of the warranty. The evidence upon this point shows that the horses were delivered to the vendee on Saturday, about 3 or 4 o'clock, and did some light work that afternoon. The next day they stood in the barn. They were driven on the following day, and in the afternoon one of them was found lame. On the following morning his leg was swollen and his condition such that he was unable to work. A skilled veterinarian was called to examine the horse, and he testifies that the horse was suffering from a disease called water farcy, Monday morning fever, or big leg, and he testifies that the horse showed marks of having had previous attacks of the disease. The testimony of another witness was to the effect that he had been acquainted with the horse some months before the sale in question, had seen him at work, and that he was lame and unsound during that time. This evidence certainly warranted a finding that the team was not sound at the time of the sale, and defendant's previous transactions, with the team would warrant the inference that he knew its condition.

We are satisfied that the decree of the district court is

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amply sustained by the evidence on every essential point, and we therefore recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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**JANE C. SIMMONS, APPELLEE, v. LURINDA KELSEY ET AL.,  
APPELLANTS.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,487.

1. **Pleading: MOTION TO STRIKE: HARMLESS ERROR.** A plea in abatement was stricken on plaintiff's motion. The defendants then incorporated the same matter, with a plea to the merits, in the answer and fully litigated such matter. *Held*, That they were not prejudiced by the ruling on the motion to strike.
2. **Mental Capacity: EXPERT TESTIMONY.** Where the mental capacity of the plaintiff to maintain the suit is in issue, her disposition, aside from the question of her mental integrity, is not involved, and is not a subject of expert investigation.
3. ——. Where the plaintiff reasonably understands the nature and purpose of her suit, the effect of her acts with reference thereto, and has the will to decide for herself whether it shall be brought and prosecuted, she has sufficient mental capacity to maintain it.
4. **Contracts: CONSIDERATION.** The dismissal, by a child, of proceedings instituted by her for the appointment of a guardian for her mother on the ground of the incompetency of the latter, is not a valid consideration for a promise made by the mother to such child.
5. **Public Policy** will not permit one who institutes such proceedings to make the prosecution or the abandonment thereof a source of profit to herself.
6. **Contracts: UNDUE INFLUENCE.** Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain a finding that plaintiff's assent to a contract was obtained by undue means and without consideration.

APPEAL from the district court for Johnson county:  
ALBERT H. BABCOCK, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

**E. B. Quackenbush** and **E. M. Tracy**, for appellants.

**S. P. Davidson**, contra.

**ALBERT, C.**

The plaintiff is a woman about 80 years old. She inherited about \$25,000 from a brother who died in the state of Illinois, of which amount about \$18,000 was ready for distribution and was to be paid over to her on or before January 7, 1903. At about that date, and before plaintiff had received any portion of the inheritance, one of her daughters instituted proceedings in the county court of Johnson county for the appointment of a guardian for the plaintiff, alleging as ground therefor that the plaintiff was not of sufficient mental capacity to have the care and management of her property. While such proceedings were pending the plaintiff entered into a contract with her husband, children and certain of her grandchildren, who are the issue of two deceased daughters, whereby she surrendered all of her estate, save less than \$3,000, to such children and grandchildren, and the amount reserved was placed practically beyond her control. After the contract was signed the proceedings for the appointment of a guardian were dismissed. In pursuance of the contract just mentioned about \$8,000 of the plaintiff's inheritance was collected and distributed among her children and grandchildren. Afterwards the plaintiff commenced this suit against the other parties to the contract for a cancelation thereof, alleging that it was made by her without any consideration, and that her assent thereto had been procured by undue means employed by defendants to that end. The plaintiff's husband and two of her sons, defendants, answered, uniting with her in the prayer for the cancelation of the contract. The other defendants filed a plea in abatement, averring that the plaintiff was an incompetent person, without a guardian, and not of sufficient capacity to maintain the

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action. This plea, when filed, was not verified, and a motion was made to strike it for that and other reasons. After the motion was filed, and about four days before the ruling thereon, but without leave of court, a verification was added. The court sustained the motion, but in doing so gave the defendants leave to incorporate the matters in abatement in their plea to the merits. Thereupon the defendants resisting the suit joined in an answer, renewing their plea in abatement, denying all matter set forth in the petition not expressly admitted, and averring that the contract was founded on a sufficient consideration, performance on their part, a subsequent ratification, and other matters not necessary to mention. The reply is a general denial. The court entered a decree dismissing this bill, and the plaintiff appealed to this court, where the judgment of dismissal was reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings. *Simmons v. Kelsey*, 72 Neb. 534. In the meantime the plaintiff's husband, one of the defendants, died, and some of the infant defendants had attained their majority, and, leave of court having been obtained, the plaintiff, after the cause was remanded, amended her petition by interlineation, showing those facts, and refiled it on the 20th day of April, 1905. The other pleadings remained as they stood at a former trial. The court found generally in favor of the plaintiff and entered a decree accordingly. The defendants who resisted the suit bring the record here for review.

The first complaint is of the ruling of the trial court on the motion to strike the plea in abatement. The motion was good when made because the plea was not verified. But, aside from that, defendants were permitted to include the same matter with their plea to the merits, and to litigate such matters fully, consequently, no substantial right of the defendants was prejudicially affected by the ruling.

Complaint is also made of several rulings of the court excluding evidence tending to show that James E. Sim-

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mons, one of the defendants who answered, joining in plaintiff's prayer for a cancelation of the contract, is addicted to the use of intoxicating liquors and betting, and is reputed to be a man of profligate and immoral habits. We are wholly unable to see how his habits or reputation are material upon any issue in this case. The court very properly refused to allow the issues between the plaintiff and the defendants resisting her suit to be obscured by such evidence, and, in our opinion, the complaint of the rejection of such evidence is not only without merit, but one that requires some hardihood to urge in a court of review.

The defendants called a physician to testify as an expert touching the mental capacity of the plaintiff, apparently, to sustain the matters pleaded in abatement of the suit. He testified, in effect, that he discovered no mental defects, but whether she would be competent to look after the ordinary business affairs of life would depend largely upon the extent of the business, and that he hardly thought her capable of managing a farm, buying and selling stock, and looking after the estate of \$10,000 or \$12,000, but that he considered her competent, with the advice and assistance of a competent attorney, to conduct this litigation. The defendants then propounded this interrogatory: "From the examination you made of the plaintiff, \* \* \* in your judgment, would she or would she not be easily influenced by one she liked or one occupying a fiduciary relationship?" The question was repeated several times in substantially the same form, and in each instance an objection thereto was sustained by the court, and the defendants now complain of these rulings. We think this evidence was properly excluded. The defendants had called this witness to show that the plaintiff was mentally incompetent. His testimony shows that he had made an examination lasting about 15 minutes. Her disposition was not in issue, and, had it been, could not have been established by expert testimony.

It is urged that the suit should have been abated be-

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cause the plaintiff lacked sufficient mental capacity to maintain it. The evidence shows that the plaintiff is a woman about 80 years of age. It is not at all surprising that, when her mental capacity is called in question, there should be abundant evidence showing that she lacked the intellectual strength and vigor that she once possessed. But that falls far short of proving that she is mentally incompetent to maintain this suit. As was said in *English v. Porter*, 109 Ill. 291: "Although the mind of a person may be to some extent impaired by age or disease, still, if he be capable of transacting his ordinary business—if he understands the nature of the business in which he is engaged, and the effect of what he is doing, and can exercise his will with reference thereto—his acts will be valid and binding." See *Emerick v. Emerick*, 83 Ia. 411, 13 L. R. A. 757, and notes. The evidence satisfies us that the plaintiff reasonably understood the nature and purpose of her suit, the effect of her acts with reference thereto, and had the will to decide for herself whether or not it should be brought and prosecuted. That, we think, is sufficient mental capacity to maintain the action. The effect of a contrary holding on the rights of the defendants at this stage of the litigation would be an interesting question, if necessary to a decision of the case.

Coming to the merits of the case, it is strenuously urged that the evidence is insufficient to sustain the decree of the district court. The defendants are children and grandchildren of the plaintiff who, as we have seen, is old and illiterate. As we have also seen, when the contract was made, proceedings which had been instituted by one of the defendants, a daughter of the plaintiff, to have a guardian appointed for her were pending in the county court. Whatever may have been the motive that induced such proceedings, the record leaves no room for doubt that they operated to disturb and harass the plaintiff, and that she was exceedingly anxious to have them dismissed. We are satisfied from the evidence that while such proceedings were pending the conduct of at least a portion

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Simmons v. Kelsey.

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of the defendants toward the plaintiff, coupled with the pendency of the proceedings, operated as duress *per minas*, whereby plaintiff's assent to the contract was obtained. No consideration moved to the plaintiff, save the dismissal of such proceedings. Obviously that was not a valid consideration, because, if the proceedings were well grounded and brought in good faith, public policy required that they be pushed to a conclusion. If groundless and not brought in good faith, public policy would again interpose and require their dismissal, and that, too, without any consideration. In either case, would the party instituting the proceedings be permitted to use them as a source of profit to herself. The fact that after instituting such proceedings she was one of the parties who undertook to bind the plaintiff by the contract in suit, involving a large estate, reflects somewhat on the good faith with which the charge of mental incapacity was preferred. The findings, then, to the effect that the contract was procured by undue means and without consideration is sufficiently sustained by the evidence, and justifies the decree, not only as to such of the defendants as made use of such means to procure the contract, but as to all who seek to profit by it. We note that the defendants resisting the suit urge that the contract has been partially performed on their part. Such performance aside from the dismissal of the proceedings for the appointment of a guardian, which we have already noticed, consists of the appropriation by the defendants of a large portion of the plaintiff's estate. It is hardly necessary to add that such acts of performance do not stand in the way of a cancellation of the contract.

It is recommended that the decree of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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Hawley v. Pound.

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ELIZA B. HAWLEY ET AL., APPELLANTS, V. ALBERT C. POUND  
ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,072.

APPEAL from the district court for Washington county:  
LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Herman Aye, R. S. Hall, G. W. Covell and Wright & Stout, for appellants.*

*John C. Cowin, W. C. Walton, D. Z. Mummert, I. C. Eller, Clark O'Hanlon and E. B. Carrigan, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

The issue in this case is identical with that in *Hawley v. Von Lanken*, 75 Neb. 597, and following the conclusion there reached we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reason stated above, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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Hawley v. Barry.

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**ELIZA B. HAWLEY ET AL., APPELLANTS, v. MICHAEL J.  
BARRY ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,073.

APPEAL from the district court for Washington county:  
LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Herman Aye, R. S. Hall, G. W. Covell and Wright & Stout,* for appellants.

*John C. Cowin, W. C. Walton, D. Z. Mummert, I. C. Eller, Clark O'Hanlon and E. B. Carrigan, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

The issue in this case is identical with that in *Hawley v. Von Lanken*, 75 Neb. 597, and following the conclusion there reached we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reason stated above, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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Hawley v. Neilson.

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ELIZA B. HAWLEY ET AL., APPELLANTS, V. SOREN M. NEILSON ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,074.

APPEAL from the district court for Washington county:  
LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Herman Aye, R. S. Hall, G. W. Covell and Wright & Stout*, for appellants.

*John C. Cowin, W. C. Walton, D. Z. Mummert, I. C. Eller, Clark O'Hanlon and E. B. Carrigan*, contra.

JACKSON, C.

The issue in this case is identical with that in *Hawley v. Von Lanken*, 75 Neb. 597, and following the conclusion there reached we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reason stated above, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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Hawley v. Neilson.

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**ELIZA B. HAWLEY ET AL., APPELLANTS, V. HANS C. NEILSON ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,075.

APPEAL from the district court for Washington county:  
LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Herman Aye, R. S. Hall, G. W. Covell and Wright & Stout, for appellants.*

*John C. Cowin, W. C. Walton, D. Z. Mummert, I. C. Eller, Clark O'Hanlon and E. B. Carrigan, contra.*

**JACKSON, C.**

The issue in this case is identical with that in *Hawley v. Von Lanken*, 75 Neb. 597, and following the conclusion there reached we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

**DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.**

By the Court: For the reason stated above, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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Hawley v. Jahnel.

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**ELIZA B. HAWLEY ET AL., APPELLANTS, v. FRANK JAHNEL  
ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,076.

APPEAL from the district court for Washington county:  
LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Herman Aye, R. S. Hall, G. W. Covell and Wright & Stout,* for appellants.

*John C. Cowin, W. C. Walton, D. Z. Mummert, I. C. Eller, Clark O'Hanlon and E. B. Carrigan, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

The issue in this case is identical with that in *Hawley v. Von Lanken*, 75 Neb. 597, and following the conclusion there reached we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reason stated above, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

**E. W. PARKER v. R. E. LEECH.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,137.

1. **Principal and Agent.** Ordinarily, an agent authorized to receive payment has no authority to commute his principal's debt for a debt due from himself to his principal's debtor, nor to receive payment other than in money.
2. **Evidence examined, and held insufficient to sustain a finding of payment.**

**ERROR to the district court for Furnas county: ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. Reversed.**

*W. S. Morlan*, for plaintiff in error.

*John T. McClure*, *contra*.

**JACKSON, C.**

This is an action on a promissory note. The answer contains a plea of payment, which is denied in the reply. From a judgment in favor of the defendant the plaintiff prosecutes error.

The sole question in the case is whether the evidence is sufficient to sustain a finding in favor of the defendant on the question of payment. It is not claimed that payment was made direct to the plaintiff, but to one Clark, to whom he authorized it to be made, and the case turns on whether what the defendant relies upon as payment to Clark amounts in law to a payment of the note. When the note was given, and at the time of its alleged payment, the plaintiff was in business in the village of Wilsonville, Clark was dealing in live stock in the village of Lebanon, in this state, and the defendant was engaged in farming, and resided in the state of Kansas, about 22 miles from the former and about 8 miles from the latter village. According to defendant's testimony, it was arranged between him and the plaintiff that the note should be paid out of

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the proceeds of the sale of certain cattle, then owned by the defendant. After the note had been due for some time, the defendant shipped the cattle to Kansas City, and sold them, receiving the proceeds of the sale in the form of a draft on a bank in Oberlin, Kansas. On his return from making the sale, he stopped at Wilsonville, informed the plaintiff of the sale, and of the draft on the bank at Oberlin. At the same time he told him of a certain sale of some hogs, which he had made to Clark, at Lebanon, and for which Clark still owed him. As to the conversation between the parties at that time, defendant's examination, in part, is as follows: "Q. Where was the draft? A. It went to Oberlin, to the bank. Q. And you told Mr. Parker when you got the money on this draft you would pay him this note? A. I told him when I went to Oberlin I would pay it, if I didn't have money enough with Clark. Q. But if you had money enough with Clark you would pay it there? A. I would get the money from him to pay it. \* \* \* Q. And Parker said you could leave the money with Clark and it would be all right? A. He told me to pay it over to him. Q. What did he say? A. I told him Clark had some money up there for my hogs, and he said: 'Well, just take and pay it over to him, and it will be all right with me.' Q. If you paid it to Clark, it would be all right with him? A. Yes, sir; and I told him if there wasn't enough there I would get it when I went to Oberlin. Q. I think, before, you said something like he said, if you would pay Clark, it would be all right. Just give the words he said. A. He told me to pay it over to Clark and it would be all right." The defendant's testimony further shows that he went from Wilsonville to Lebanon, where he saw Clark, and that he informed Clark of the arrangement made with plaintiff for the payment of the note, and of the amount due thereon, ascertained the amount due him from Clark, which was a few dollars less than the amount of the note; that at the same time he arranged with Clark to sell him some hogs to make up the difference, and that Clark

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should then remit the amount of the note to the plaintiff. His testimony further shows that, within two or three days thereafter he sold two more hogs to Clark, for a sum more than sufficient to make up the deficit. Whereupon, Clark retained sufficient of the amount due defendant to pay the note, paid him the excess and agreed to pay plaintiff the amount of the note.

Assuming that the defendant's version of the transaction is true, and it is by no means inherently improbable, still, we think it is insufficient to sustain a finding of payment. It is clear, we think, from that portion of the evidence set out, that the plaintiff had no intention to substitute Clark for the defendant as his debtor. In fact, his language, even as quoted by the defendant himself, appears to have been carefully chosen to avoid that construction, and to merely make Clark his agent to receive payment. As such agent, Clark had no authority to commute plaintiff's claim for his own debt to the defendant. *Padfield v. Green*, 85 Ill. 529; *Hurley v. Watson*, 68 Mich. 531. See 1 Am. & Eng. Ency. Law (2d ed.), p. 1,028, and notes. That he had no authority to receive payment other than in money is elementary. Hence, we have a case where the defendant, dealing with the plaintiff's agent, authorized to receive payment of a debt due from the defendant to the plaintiff, undertook, by an arrangement between himself and the agent, to offset a debt due him from the agent against his indebtedness to the plaintiff, and to pay the balance other than in money. That, as we have seen, was not within the scope of the agent's authority, and would not support the plea of payment. This rule is a salutary one, and in view of another issue disclosed by the evidence has a peculiar application to this case. Clark was a witness on behalf of the plaintiff and testified that no such arrangement as the testimony of Leech disclosed was entered into between Leech and himself. His testimony was to the effect that, while he bought hogs of Leech, the purchase price thereof was credited on an account between Leech and himself, and in satisfaction of

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Leech's indebtedness to him. It would be a harsh rule to require a creditor to accept in lieu of an undisputed debt a chance to recover in litigation with a third party, in the absence of an express agreement to do so.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause is remanded for further proceedings according to law.

**REVERSED.**

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**CHARLES T. JENKINS, APPELLANT, v. L. E. CAMPBELL ET AL.,  
APPELLEES.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,173.

**Justice of the Peace: APPEAL: DISMISSAL: EXECUTION.** Pending an appeal from a judgment rendered in justice's court, the judgment creditor procured and filed in the district court a transcript of the proceedings had before the justice of the peace, and after dismissal of the appeal, and an order remanding the cause to the justice for further proceedings, caused an execution to issue out of the district court on the transcript so filed. Held, That the execution was void.

**APPEAL from the district court for Dundy county:  
ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. Reversed with directions.**

*Charles T. Jenkins, pro se.*

*W. R. Starr and T. J. Doyle, contra.*

**JACKSON, C.**

On November 22, 1902, the International Harvester Company recovered a judgment before a justice of the

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peace in Lancaster county against Charles T. Jenkins. Jenkins procured to be filed and approved a bond for the purpose of perfecting an appeal to the district court. A transcript of the proceedings had before the justice of the peace was seasonably filed in the district court. On January 7, 1903, the company filed a motion in the appellate court attacking the sufficiency of the undertaking. The motion was supported by affidavit, and on the 5th day of February of that year the cause came on to be heard upon the motion, which was sustained, and the defendant was required to give a new bond. On the 13th day of May following, no additional undertaking having been given, the appeal was dismissed and the cause remanded to the justice's court for further proceedings. On February 10, 1903, and while the appeal was pending in the district court, the harvester company procured and filed in the office of the clerk of the district court for Lancaster county a transcript of the proceedings had before the justice of the peace. The transcript so filed disclosed all of the proceedings had before the justice, including the filing and approval of the appeal undertaking, together with the fact that the transcript had been prepared for an appeal. After the dismissal of the appeal in the district court, the harvester company caused an execution to issue out of the district court on the transcript which it filed therein while the appeal was pending. The execution was sent to the sheriff of Dundy county, who levied upon certain property belonging to the judgment debtor to satisfy the judgment, and thereupon the debtor, appellant herein, instituted this action in the district court for Dundy county, seeking to enjoin the sheriff and others from proceeding under the execution. A temporary injunction was allowed, which on final hearing was dissolved and the action dismissed. The plaintiff appeals.

The sole question presented by the record is whether a valid execution could issue on the transcript filed in the district court by the judgment creditor while the appeal

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from the judgment was pending. The rule is that, by perfecting an appeal from the judgment of an inferior court, the judgment is thereby vacated and the matter stands as it did at the commencement of the action. The lower court is ousted of jurisdiction, and any proceedings taken by the judgment creditor to enforce the judgment pending the appeal are not only void, but contemptuous of the appellate court. *State v. Johnson*, 13 Fla. 33; *M'Laughlin v. Janney*, 6 Grat. (Va.) 609. That rule has been approved and followed in this state. *Jenkins v. State*, 60 Neb. 205. The transcript upon which the execution was issued was not only taken while the appeal was pending, but it discloses on its face every step taken in the lower court necessary to the perfection of an appeal. It does not show that the appeal was disposed of and would not authorize the clerk to issue an extension. It had no vitality when it was filed, it could not be made the basis of an execution and was absolutely void for the purpose intended. The creditor, doubtless, might have had judgment in the district court upon the failure of the appellant to file an additional appeal undertaking. Instead, however, of pursuing that course, it caused the appeal to be dismissed and the cause remanded to the justice's court for further proceedings. Such further proceedings, of course, related to the enforcement of the judgment, and any action taken by the judgment creditor for the collection thereof should have been initiated in the court where the judgment existed. To hold that the creditor acquired any rights under the transcript in question would be to encourage litigants to proceed in spite of the law and in contempt of the court.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to enter judgment in accordance with the views here expressed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to enter judgment in accordance with the views here expressed.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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**SECURITY MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, APPELLEE,  
v. NICHOLAS RESS ET AL., APPELLANTS.**

FILED MARCH 8, 1906. No. 14,181.

1. Corporations: **VENUE.** The fact that an agent is temporarily employed in transacting the business of a domestic corporation in a county other than the one where the corporation has its principal place of business does not subject such corporation to the jurisdiction of the courts of that county under the provisions of section 55 of the code.
2. ——: ——. The residence of a person who is employed as the agent of a domestic corporation is personal, and is immaterial in an inquiry as to whether a domestic corporation is situated in a county within the meaning of said section.

**APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:  
ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*Talbot & Allen and W. H. Thompson*, for appellants.

*N. Z. Snell and Field, Ricketts & Ricketts*, contra.

**JACKSON, C.**

The appellee had judgment in the district court for Lancaster county enjoining the sheriff of that county and others from enforcing an execution issued out of the district court for Hall county. The defendants have brought the case to this court by appeal.

The appellee is a domestic life insurance corporation, with the principal place of transacting its business in the

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city of Lincoln. An action was instituted against the appellee in the district court for Hall county by the beneficiaries named in a policy of life insurance issued by appellee. Summons was issued and delivered to the sheriff of that county, who made return as follows: "The State of Nebraska, Hall County, ss.: I hereby certify that on the 27th day of June, 1904, I served the within writ of summons on the within named the Security Mutual Life Insurance Company by delivering a true and duly certified copy of the same with all indorsements thereon to Charles Wasmer, he being the agent and chief officer of the said the Security Mutual Life Insurance Company in Hall county. S. N. Taylor, Sheriff." The company made no appearance in that action, and on September 28, 1904, judgment was entered as prayed in the petition. On the following day the sheriff of Hall county applied to the court for permission to amend his return to correspond with the facts relative to the service, and, leave of court having been obtained, the return was amended to read as follows: "The State of Nebraska, Hall County, ss.: By leave of court Sept. 29, 1904, I hereby certify that on the 27th day of June, 1904, I served the within writ of summons on the within named the Security Mutual Life Insurance Company by leaving a true and duly certified copy of the same with all indorsements thereon at the usual place of residence of Charles Wasmer, he being the agent and chief officer of the said the Security Mutual Life Insurance Company in Hall county. No other officer of said defendant being found in Hall county. S. N. Taylor, Sheriff." In fact, the sheriff left a copy of the summons at the residence of Charles Wasmer, whose wife forwarded the same to him, he then being absent from Hall county. When Wasmer returned to his home he brought the copy with him and placed it in a pigeonhole in his desk at his residence. He did not forward it to the company, and failed to inform the company of the fact of such service.

Wasmer was termed a special agent. His employment

by the company was by written contract. He had authority to solicit applications for insurance, to collect and receipt on the company's binding receipt form for any part or all of the first year's premium on insurance applied for, and to remit the same to the company with the application. He was authorized by the contract to solicit insurance only in such territory as might be designated or permitted by the directors of the company, and his employment contemplated the appointment and instruction of subagents, subject to the approval of the directors of the company. In consideration for the services he was to receive a certain stipulated per cent. of the premiums. The company maintained no office in Hall county. Wasmer had no office there, although it was his home and his residence was there with his family. Concerning this Wasmer testified as follows: "Q. Have you ever had any office there? I mean the Security Mutual Life Insurance Company? A. Not since I have been with the Security Mutual Life Insurance Company; no sir. Q. Where do you solicit insurance? A. Wherever I go. I travel a great deal, go to other places, counties and cities, and visit parties whom I would like to talk insurance to. Q. How much of your time do you actually put in in Hall county would you say? A. Well, it is very little time. It is only the time when I am coming home for a few days; probably not more than two months in a year. \* \* \* Q. You may state when you were in Grand Island last prior to the 27th day of June, 1904. A. I was there on the 9th day of May. Q. And then when next were you in Hall county? A. On the 6th day of July. I arrived there about the 3d of July. \* \* \* Q. And between those dates you were not in Hall county? A. Not that I know of, I could not say surely. Q. Well, how certain are you of it? A. I am certain this way, that I have not been in Grand Island from the 20th day of June until the 3d day of July; that is the time that I suppose is important. Q. Grand Island or Hall county? A. Yes, sir. The company procured from the state audi-

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tor an agent's certificate for Wasmer, describing him as an agent at Grand Island, in Hall county, and authorizing him to transact the business of insurance as agent of the company in the state. This certificate was in force at the time the action was commenced in Hall county. Wasmer appointed no subagents, but did, in fact, solicit insurance for the company in all parts of the state without restriction. The secretary of the company was a witness in its behalf, and testified to its principal place of business as having been originally located at Fremont and afterwards changed to Lincoln; that the company never was located in Hall county and had maintained no office there; that all the agents of the company were employed to solicit insurance and were authorized to collect the first premium; that they could select their own territory wherever the company was authorized to do business; that Wasmer operated at Grand Island, Scotia, Cedar Rapids, Spalding, Primrose, Wolbach, St. Paul, Wilber and Talmage; that they corresponded with him at whatever point he happened to be, unless they were in doubt as to where he was, when his mail was sent to his residence at Grand Island to be forwarded.

The cause of action arose in Lancaster county, and prior to the proceedings in Hall county action on the policy had been instituted in the county of Lancaster; the case there tried resulting in a verdict and judgment for the plaintiffs which on error to the supreme court had been reversed, and thereafter, for some reason, the action was by the plaintiffs dismissed without prejudice.

The questions presented by this appeal are: Did the district court for Hall county have jurisdiction to hear and determine the case; did the service shown by the record give the district court for Hall county jurisdiction over the person of the insurance company; and, if not, has the company shown itself entitled to relief, as against the judgment there rendered, by injunction. Section 55 of the code, in force at the time of the institution of the action, was as follows: "An action other than one of

those mentioned in the first three sections of this title, against a corporation created by the laws of this state, may be brought in the county in which it is situated, or has its principal office or place of business; but if such corporation be an insurance company, the action may be brought in the county where the cause of action, or some part thereof, arose." None of the provisions of the first three sections of the title applies to actions like the one under consideration. In *Western Travelers Accident Ass'n v. Taylor*, 62 Neb. 783, that section was construed, and it was held that a domestic corporation could only be sued, first, in the county where, by its articles of incorporation, it has fixed its principal office or place of business; second, in any county where it maintains an agency and servants and employees engaged in carrying on the business for which it exists; and, third, in the county where the cause of action, or some part thereof, arose. The sixth paragraph of the syllabus in that case is:

"When the legislature provides the county in which a domestic corporation may be sued, such provision is exclusive."

It is conceded that the corporation did not have its principal office or place of business in Hall county and that the cause of action arose in Lancaster county, so that the question is, did the company maintain an agency in Hall county, so that it might be said to be situated there, within the meaning of the provisions of section 55. In paragraph five of the syllabus in *Western Travelers Accident Ass'n v. Taylor*, *supra*, it is said:

"A domestic corporation may be sued only in the places provided by law, and the temporary presence of one or more of the officers of such corporation in another jurisdiction does not authorize the corporation to be sued there."

In that case service was had on the secretary of the company while temporarily in Douglas county, engaged in an effort to settle the very controversy over which the action was brought. The principal place of business of the corporation was in Hall county, it maintained no

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office in Douglas county, and it was held that the action was improperly brought in Douglas county.

In *Fremont Butter & Egg Co. v. Snyder*, 39 Neb. 632, the company was a domestic corporation with its principal place of business at Fremont, in Dodge county. It was sued in Saunders county. The jurisdiction of the court over the corporation in that county was questioned. It appeared, however, from the evidence that the company had a branch house at Wahoo, in Saunders county, where it displayed its sign, "Fremont Butter & Egg Co. Buyers of Butter and Eggs." It had employed there one or more persons engaged in transacting the company's business, buying, assorting and boxing eggs, which were shipped to the Fremont house and to other points, as the corporation manager directed. The business there was of a permanent nature, and it was held that the action was properly brought in Saunders county; that the corporation was situated there within the meaning of the statute.

In *Bankers Life Ins. Co. v. Robbins*, 53 Neb. 44, an action on a life insurance policy against a domestic corporation, it was held that the action was properly brought in Valley county, although the company was domiciled in Lancaster county, because of the fact that the insured died in Valley county, and the cause of action arose there for that reason.

A review of the adjudications of this court, where the provisions of section 55 of the code have been under consideration, leads to the conclusion that the mere presence of an agent of a domestic corporation in a county is not sufficient to give the courts of that county jurisdiction in an action against such corporation, and the residence of an agent does not necessarily justify the inference that the principal is situated within the county of such residence; and the fact that an agent is temporarily engaged in transacting the business of his principal even in the county where the agent resides, is not sufficient to vest the courts of that county with jurisdiction over an action against the corporation. We do not regard the fact that

Wasmer resided in Hall county as being at all important to the inquiry. The duties arising out of his employment were of such a character that they could and did permit of their being performed in any county in the state, and there is no more reason for holding that, because of his employment, an action might be maintained against the company in Hall county, than for holding that, because of such employment, the company might be sued in any county where he was transacting its business. We think something more is contemplated by the term "situated" in section 55 than the mere temporary presence of an agent in a county for the purpose of transacting the company's business. The fact that the agent received and answered correspondence and kept blank supplies in his residence in Hall county, as the evidence discloses, is not sufficient to show that the company maintained an office there. He received and answered correspondence in every county where he transacted business, he carried supplies with him as an incident to his employment; in fact, the business transacted by him for his principal was the same in whatever county he was employed. The scope of the employment and the character of the business transacted by him all tend to support the claim of the company that they maintained no office in Hall county; that the company was not situated there within the meaning of the statute, and we think the trial court correctly concluded that the judgment rendered in Hall county was void for that reason.

The company has pleaded that at the time of the death of the insured the policy had lapsed by reason of the nonpayment of premiums, and the evidence is sufficient to establish that defense, at least, *prima facie*; but the appellant insists, notwithstanding, that the remedy by injunction should not be allowed because the company had an adequate remedy at law. In *Bankers Life v. Robbins, supra*, it was held:

"A remedy is not adequate, within the meaning of this rule, which compels the citizen to go from the county of

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his residence into a foreign jurisdiction in which he has never been present and in which he has never been lawfully summoned. The right of the insurance company to be sued in the county where its principal place of business was located, or in some county in which it was situated or had an agent, was and is a legal right; and it is a strained construction of language to say that, because a litigant may go into a foreign jurisdiction and enter a special appearance to an action, that that remedy is adequate, when, besides the costs, expenses, and time spent in attending court in the foreign jurisdiction, he is compelled to surrender valuable legal rights."

The rule there announced is peculiarly applicable to the conditions of this case, and is a complete answer to the claim of a lack of equity.

The judgment of the district court was right, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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JOHN LOAR V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,514.

1. **Rape: Evidence.** In a trial for statutory rape, admissions by the defendant showing that he planned and procured an opportunity to commit the act charged, with evidence of familiarities between them, furnishes sufficient corroboration of the girl's positive testimony to support a judgment of conviction.
2. **Review: Record.** Affidavits found in the files of the case or attached to the transcript cannot be considered as having been used in support of a motion for new trial, unless they are included in and shown by the certificate of the proper officer to be a part of the bill of exceptions, and to have been actually used in evidence upon the hearing of the motion.

ERROR to the district court for Garfield county: JOHN R. HANNA, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*E. M. White and A. M. Robbins*, for plaintiff in error.

*Norris Brown, Attorney General*, and *W. T. Thompson, contra.*

**SEDGWICK, C. J.**

The defendant, John Loar, plaintiff in error here, was convicted in the district court for Garfield county of the crime of statutory rape. He has brought the judgment here for review upon a petition in error.

1. The principal contention is that the evidence is not sufficient to support the verdict. The act itself is testified to by the girl Mary Kramer, and is denied by the defendant. It is insisted that the evidence of the girl is inconsistent with itself, that her testimony is unreliable, and that there are no corroborating circumstances. The record shows that the girl was between 16 and 17 years of age. Her parents were German, and she was not entirely familiar with the English language, or, at all events, it appears from the record that she frequently failed to comprehend the full force of the questions that were asked her. There are apparent inconsistencies in her testimony, and her evidence, if uncorroborated, would be subject to criticism. Whether this fact is due in part to her ignorance and want of familiarity with the language used, or was altogether owing to her failure to comprehend the importance of accuracy and directness in her evidence given in so important a matter, it is impossible to say from the condition of this record. We think it is a mistake to suppose that her evidence is not corroborated. Indeed, the corroboration is so strong that it might with candor be insisted that the proof of the defendant's guilt was sufficient without regard to the testimony of the prosecutrix. The defendant was a man

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past 26 years of age. He had been in the army during the Spanish war, had traveled considerably and had lived in different places, apparently not long at any one time in the same place. A short time before the transaction in question he had begun working by the month for Mr. Spelts at his ranch, in Garfield county, and had boarded and roomed with the family, which consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Spelts. Mr. and Mrs. Spelts left home to be gone from the county for several days. Shortly before that Mary Kramer had stayed a few days and nights with Mrs. Spelts, and the defendant states at that time the girl came to his sleeping room unknown to Mr. and Mrs. Spelts, and that there were then familiarities between them. Mr. and Mrs. Spelts both testify that, when they were about to go away from home, the question being raised with the defendant as to who should do his cooking for him while they were gone, they suggested a certain woman whom he might procure to cook for him, but objected to his getting Mary Kramer who had before that time stayed with Mrs. Spelts. The defendant modifies this statement somewhat, but we do not understand him to deny that they objected to his getting Mary Kramer. Soon after they had gone, within an hour or two, according to the defendant's testimony, he went over to Mr. Kramer's place, about three miles distant, for the purpose of getting Mary to come and stay with him. Mr. and Mrs. Kramer both testify that he told them that Mrs. Spelts wanted Mary to come and stay while her husband was gone, and that it was upon that understanding that they allowed her to go. The defendant, however, testifies that he asked them to allow Mary to go over and stay while Mr. Spelts was gone. He says that he did not tell them that Mrs. Spelts was at home, nor did he tell them that Mrs. Spelts had gone. Whatever may have been the language that he used, it is very manifest from the record that Mr. and Mrs. Kramer supposed that Mrs. Spelts was there, and that she had sent for Mary. It also seems clear from the defendant's testimony that he

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knew that Mr. and Mrs. Kramer so understood the matter and was aware that they would not have allowed Mary to go if they had known that Mrs. Spelts was away from home. He says that after he and Mary left the Kramer house to go home he told her that Mrs. Spelts was not at home. He also says, in another part of his testimony, that just before they arrived at the Spelts place he told Mary that Mrs. Spelts was not at home. The girl denies this, and says that she did not know that Mrs. Spelts was away from home until, after they had put away the horses, when they went to the door and it appeared that the door was locked. The defendant and the girl stayed at Mr. Spelts' house several days and nights, no other person being present. In this condition of the evidence it is not necessary to discuss in detail the evidence of the girl, who testified explicitly to the criminal act. The defendant himself testifies that soon after they arrived, and either the first evening or the next day, he is not certain which, there were familiarities between them, such as might lead to the act itself. These familiarities, according to his evidence, were continued at various other times during their cohabitation together. The opportunity for sexual intercourse, and the disposition on the part of both parties to commit the crime, when clearly shown, are generally held sufficient to establish the charge. This evidence was furnished by the defendant's testimony.

2. One other contention is discussed in the briefs, and was presented upon the oral argument. This relates to the disqualification of one of the jurors. It is claimed that while the trial was pending, the jury being allowed to separate, one of the jurors expressed in the hearing of several parties a decided opinion as to the guilt of the defendant, and there are among the files in the case affidavits which it is claimed support this contention. The bill of exceptions in the case contains the evidence introduced upon the trial before the jury. It does not purport to contain the affidavits above referred to, nor any other evi-

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dence used upon the motion for a new trial. The certificate is that the defendant "in order to maintain the issues on his part produced the following named witnesses, to wit, John Loar and Henry Phillips, who were each sworn and testified on behalf of the defendant, a copy of whose testimony is contained at length herein; and the defendant in order to further maintain the issues on his part produced and offered the following exhibits, to wit, exhibit 1 and 2, which are hereto attached and made a part hereof." Exhibit 1 is an affidavit for continuance, and exhibit 2 is a pension certificate, so that the affidavits used upon the motion for a new trial are expressly excluded by the certificate itself; that they are entitled in the case does not tend to authenticate them. It has been so many times determined by this court, and others that fugitive papers found among the files which are not identified by the certificate as a part of the bill of exceptions, cannot be considered by the court, that it is unnecessary to cite authorities or further discuss the matter.

The judgment of the district court is fully sustained by the record, and is therefore

**AFFIRMED.**

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**MICHAEL F. DEMPSEY v. EDWARD STOUT.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,597.

A complaint, which alleges that the defendant, "having in his possession solely for his own use, as his own property, tobacco and a paper commonly known as cigarette paper, did place certain of said tobacco within said paper, and did proceed to roll the same into form as a cigarette, solely for his own use," does not charge the "manufacture" of cigarettes within the meaning of the statute.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: GEORGE A. DAY and HOWARD KENNEDY, JR., JUDGES. *Affirmed.*

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson,*  
for plaintiff in error.

*W. D. McHugh, contra.*

**SEDWICK, C. J.**

The question presented in this proceeding depends upon the meaning of the word "manufacture" as used in the anti-cigarette law. The complaint upon which this defendant was arrested charges that: "Edward Stout on or about the 29th day of November, A. D. 1905, in the county aforesaid and within the incorporate limits of the city of Omaha aforesaid, then and there being an adult man of the age of 30 years and not engaged in the business of the manufacture or sale of tobacco, cigars or cigarettes or cigarette papers, and then and there having in his possession solely for his own use, as his own property, tobacco and a paper commonly known as cigarette paper, did place certain of said tobacco within said paper, and did proceed to roll the same into form as a cigarette, solely for his own use and for the purpose of smoking the same himself and with the intent so to do; and he the said Edward Stout did then and there proceed to light the same and did smoke the same, thereby manufacturing a cigarette, contrary to the form of the statutes in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the state of Nebraska." Upon the argument the merits of the motion for a rehearing in *Alperson v. Whalen*, 74 Neb. 680, now pending in this court, were also discussed. In that case it was held that the giving away of cigarettes and cigarette paper is prohibited by the statute, and that such prohibition is not invalid because not sufficiently expressed in the title of the act. It was said that the purpose of the act was "to protect the people of the state against results arising from furnishing these articles to the public." That it appears from the act itself that the legislature "supposed that the

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use of cigarettes was injurious to the public in general, through its effects upon the health and morals of the people," and that to discourage this use "it was made unlawful to manufacture, sell, or give away the article itself, and a particular material that is used only in the manufacture of that article." That the manifest intention was to remove these articles from the avenues of commerce, and to prevent all traffic therein, and it was held that this purpose was manifest from the title of the act. Upon the argument it was insisted that giving away these articles is a separate and distinct subject from the manufacture and sale thereof, and this was the ground of the argument that the legislation is unconstitutional. To this proposition it was suggested by the attorney general that, if the giving away of the articles was a distinct subject, then clearly the manufacture and sale were two distinct subjects, and, so, it would follow that there must be three separate acts; one prohibiting the manufacture, another prohibiting the sale, and another prohibiting the giving away of the articles. This suggestion seems to be unanswerable. The only reasonable conclusion is that neither the manufacture, nor the sale, nor the giving away of these articles is of itself the subject of the legislation. If the subject of the legislation is considered to be the traffic in cigarettes, and if that subject is sufficiently expressed in the title of the act, then the conclusion of the opinion in *Alperson v. Whalen, supra*, is justifiable. Applying this construction of the act to the case at bar, does the complaint state an offense? It was contended upon the hearing that the legislature has no power to regulate the personal habits of an individual by forbidding him to use cigarettes; that it is the right of the sovereign citizen to eat, drink and smoke what he may choose to, although it may be the judgment of the legislature that he is injuring himself by so doing. From a comparison of this suggestion with the act itself and the title thereof, it will readily be seen that the legislature in this act has avoided any attempt to regulate the personal habits of the citizen.

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As shown in the opinion in *Alperson v. Whalen, supra*, the purpose of the law is to suppress the traffic in, and not to forbid the use of, these articles. It is true that the law assumes that the use of the articles is injurious to the health and morals of the public, and that therefore traffic in the articles themselves should be made illegitimate. The law thus discourages the use of the articles, but it intentionally avoids forbidding the individual to use them. The word "manufacture" in the act, then, is used in the sense of "to engage in and carry on the business of manufacturing." It is the business of manufacturing for traffic that is prohibited. The act of "rolling cigarettes" from one's own materials and for one's own use is so connected with the use as to be a part of such use, and this it was clearly not intended by the legislature to prohibit. This action originated in the district court for Douglas county, and it was there held that the complaint failed to state an offense.

We think the conclusion of the district court was correct, and its judgment is therefore

AFFIRMED.

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STATE, EX REL. JOHN S. BISHOP, APPELLEE, V. LEE J.  
DUNN ET AL., APPELLANTS.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,620.

1. **Statutes: Construction.** Statutes *in pari materia* should be construed together, and their provisions harmonized, if possible; and where the conflict between them relates to an immaterial matter, such as the name or title by which an officer shall be designated, such discrepancies will be disregarded by the courts.
2. The city council of a city of the first class, as a legislative body, has the power, by ordinance, to establish and adopt suitable rules for its own government in matters of procedure; and such rules, when adopted, will not be set aside by the courts, unless they are directly, or by necessary implication, in conflict with some provision of the statutes.

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3. **Mandamus will not lie to compel the president *pro tempore* of such city council to preside over the meetings of that body, and appoint its standing committees, where that duty is neither enjoined upon him by statute nor by ordinance.**

**APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Reversed and dismissed.***

*E. C. Strode, Dennis J. Flaherty and A. S. Tibbets*, for appellants.

*John S. Bishop, contra.*

BARNES, J.

The respondent and the intervenor have brought this case here by an appeal from a judgment of the district court for Lancaster county awarding the relator a peremptory writ of mandamus commanding the respondent to preside at all meetings of the city council of the city of Lincoln and appoint the standing committees of said council. It appears that in the year 1902 the city council of the city of Lincoln passed an ordinance known as "Ordinance No. 107," by which it was provided, among other things, as follows: "The council is hereby authorized to elect one of the members of the council as president of the council, who shall preside at all meetings of the council, and, while so presiding, shall have the same privileges as other members. He shall appoint all the standing committees of the council, and perform such other duties as are usually performed by a presiding officer. In the absence of the mayor from the city, or in any case when the mayor is from any cause disqualified from acting as mayor, the president of the council shall be *ex officio* mayor, and all his acts, while so acting as mayor, shall be as binding upon the mayor and upon the city as if done by the mayor." That ordinance was in force at the time the legislature passed the act of 1905, amending article I, ch. 13, Comp. St., commonly called the "City Charter." That act amended section 13, and other sections of the charter, so that said

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section 13 as amended, among other things, provides: "The mayor shall be *ex officio* president of the said council, and shall preside at the meetings thereof, and shall appoint the standing committees of said council, and in the event of a tie vote shall cast the deciding vote: Provided, however, that the council shall have the power to elect a president *pro tempore* who shall preside over the meetings of the council in the absence of the mayor and who shall exercise the powers of the mayor on his absence from the city." The amended charter also provides for the election of seven city aldermen or councilmen at large, together with seven ward councilmen; whereas, under the former charter all of the fourteen councilmen were elected from their respective wards, and were known as ward councilmen. After the officers elected under the amended charter qualified and assumed their duties, the city council was reorganized, and the mayor, the intervener herein, became *ex officio* a member of said council, presided over the meetings thereof, and appointed the standing committees above mentioned. The respondent, who had theretofore been acting as president of the council under the provisions of the old charter, and by virtue of ordinance No. 107, thereupon declined to preside at its meetings, and refused to appoint the aforesaid committees. The relator, who is one of the members of the city council, demanded that the respondent preside at the meetings of that body, and appoint its standing committees. The respondent refused to comply with that demand, and the relator thereupon commenced the present suit in the district court for Lancaster county, to compel him to perform the acts above mentioned. The mayor, Francis W. Brown, intervened; issues were properly framed, and the matter was submitted to the court upon the evidence and an agreed statement of facts. The trial resulted in a judgment awarding the relator a peremptory writ of mandamus, as prayed.

The relator now contends that the provision of section 13, above quoted, is unconstitutional and void, because it is not germane to the subject matter of the original sec-

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tion. The question of the constitutionality of the amendatory act of 1905 was before us in *State v. Malone*, 74 Neb. 645, where it was upheld. It is contended, however, that the validity of that part of section 13 in question herein was not determined in that case; that what was there said was *obiter*, and was the view of one member of the court only. We may say, in passing, that whatever was there said was concurred in by every member of the court, as then constituted, and was our unanimous opinion on the questions there decided. It is true, we did not deem it necessary in that case to determine the question now presented; neither do we think we are now required to pass on it, in deciding the case at bar, for reasons which we shall presently give.

It is further contended by the relator that section 13 of the charter, as amended, and section 27 thereof are in "irreconcilable conflict, and their provisions are hopelessly repugnant." It is said, in substance, that one or the other must be declared invalid; that section 27 is not repealed by implication, and the provisions of section 13, which are in conflict with those contained in section 27, must be declared void. We decline to entertain this view of the matter. Section 13 creates the office of president *pro tempore* of the council, and provides that he shall preside over its meetings in the absence of the mayor, and shall exercise the powers of the mayor on his absence from the city. Section 27 provides: "In case of vacancy in the office of the mayor or in case of his absence or disability, the president of the council shall exercise the powers and duties of the office until such vacancy shall be filled or disability removed, or in case of temporary absence, until the mayor returns, and such acting mayor shall perform such other duties as may be required by law." It is our duty to read and construe the two sections together, and, if possible, to reconcile their provisions. Proceeding with this rule in view, we find that section 27 seems to supplement the provisions of section 13, and provides for contingencies not mentioned in the last named section. By

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section 13 the mayor is made *ex officio* a member of the council and it is his duty to preside over its meetings, and appoint its standing committees. It is further provided by that section that the council may elect a president *pro tempore* who shall preside over its meetings in the absence of the mayor, and shall exercise the powers of the mayor on his absence from the city; while section 27 makes a further provision that the president of the council shall exercise the powers and duties of a mayor, not only in his absence, but in case of his disability, or where there is a vacancy in the office, until such vacancy is filled. So it seems clear that the only conflict between the two sections is where one speaks of a president *pro tempore* of the council, and the other designates the officer as president of that body. This distinction or discrepancy, if such it may be called, does not seem to be of sufficient consequence to entitle the relator, in the absence of any pecuniary interest on his part, to the extraordinary writ of mandamus by which to control the discretion of the city council and regulate his methods of procedure. The question seems to be one of mere fancy, rather than of substantial right. We seldom make use of maxims to illustrate a point, but it would seem "*de minimis non curat lex*" should be applied in this case.

Lastly, it is contended by the relator that section 13, as amended, and subdivision 53 of section 129 of the charter are in direct conflict, and therefore the amendment in question must be declared void. Section 129 is entitled "Ordinances," and provides: "In addition to the powers herein granted, cities governed under the provisions of this act shall have power by ordinance: \* \* \* (subdivision 53) To elect one of the members of the city council as president of the council, and who shall preside at all meetings of the council, and have equal privileges with the other members of the council, and in the absence of the mayor from the city shall perform the duties of mayor." It seems clear, from the language above quoted, that subdivision 53 does not, of itself, create a president

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of the city council or prescribe his duties; that it is without force and effect until the council has exercised the power or privilege conferred thereby. Ordinance No. 107 having been repealed the subdivision in question is inoperative, and, therefore, in no manner conflicts with the provisions of section 13, as amended.

As above stated, the city council has, since the commencement of this action, repealed ordinance No. 107, and for the purpose of harmonizing its methods of procedure with the provisions of the amended charter, on February 8 of the present year, passed an ordinance, known as "Ordinance No. 346," by which it is provided: "The council is hereby authorized to elect one of the members of the council as president *pro tempore* of the council, who shall preside at all meetings of the council in the absence of the mayor, and, while so presiding, shall have the same privileges as other members of the council. He shall perform such duties as are usually performed by a presiding officer. In the absence of the mayor from the city, or in any case when the mayor is from any cause disqualified from acting as mayor, the president *pro tempore* of the council shall be *ex officio* mayor, and all his acts, while so acting as mayor, shall be as binding upon the council and upon the city as if done by the mayor." From the foregoing it appears that, at the time the peremptory writ was allowed, there was no provision either of ordinance or statute authorizing the president to preside over the city council, and appoint its standing committees. It is contended, however, by the relator that ordinance No. 346 is void, because the inducement to its passage was the amendment to section 13 of the charter, above mentioned. As before stated, we have already held that the amendatory act in question, as a whole, is valid and constitutional, and we are satisfied that without invoking its provisions the powers conferred upon the city council by other provisions of the charter are broad enough to authorize it to pass the ordinance in question. It stands to reason that the city council, a legislative body, has the inherent power, by ordinance, to

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provide for and establish rules for its own procedure; and the rules thus adopted will not be interfered with or set aside by the courts, unless they are directly, or by necessary implication, in conflict with some provision of the statute. Again, we find, from an examination of the published volume of city ordinances, which is in evidence herein, that at the time this action was commenced there was an ordinance in force in the city of Lincoln, known as "Rule 33" by which it is provided: "Standing committees shall be appointed by the mayor, from the councilmen, at the beginning of the municipal year." And by section 5 of said ordinances the mayor is required to preside at all meetings of the city council, and is given the casting vote when that body is equally divided.

So we are of opinion that the relator was not entitled to any relief when this action was commenced; that ordinance No. 346 is valid, and both the relator and the respondent are bound by the method of procedure therein provided for.

For the foregoing reasons, the judgment of the district court is reversed, the writ is denied, and the cause is hereby dismissed at the costs of the relator.

**JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.**

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**GEORGE VON HALLER V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,496.

1. **Instructions: RECORD.** Where the evidence has not been preserved by a bill of exceptions, the presumption is that instructions to the jury which refer to the testimony are based upon and supported by the evidence in the case.
2. **Instructions set forth in the opinion examined, and held not erroneous.**

**ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: GEORGE A. DAY, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

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*A. W. Jeffris and Hamer & Hamer*, for plaintiff in error.

*Norris Brown, Attorney General*, and *W. T. Thompson*, contra.

LETTON, J.

The plaintiff in error was found guilty of murder in the second degree upon an information charging murder in the first degree. No bill of exceptions was preserved. In his petition in error and brief he argues that the court erred in giving the thirteenth, fourteenth and a part of the twentieth instruction to the jury, and in the refusal of the 13th instruction requested by him.

1. Instruction numbered 13 is as follows: "If you are satisfied from the evidence in this case, or if the evidence raises in your mind a reasonable doubt that, while the defendant was in the pursuit of his lawful business, the deceased Maurice D. Rees made an unlawful attack upon the defendant, and opened fire upon the defendant with a revolver which the deceased then held in his hand, and if from the nature of the attack a reasonable person, a person of ordinary courage, judgment and observation, in the position of the defendant, and knowing what he knew, and seeing what he saw, would have been justified in believing that there was a design on the part of the deceased to take the life of the defendant, or to do him great bodily harm, then, under such circumstances, the defendant would have been justified in believing himself in danger of his life, or of suffering great bodily injury, and would have had the legal right to kill his assailant, and if, under such circumstances, the defendant shot and killed the said Maurice D. Rees, such killing, under such circumstances, would be justifiable on the ground of self-defense, and you should acquit the defendant." The defendant urges that by this instruction the jury were required to do an impossible thing. They were first to be satisfied from the

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evidence that, while the defendant was in the pursuit of his lawful business, the deceased made an unlawful attack upon him, etc., and they are also told that, if the evidence raises in their minds a reasonable doubt as to these facts, they will acquit, and that the instruction therefore directs the jury to perform the impossible. We think this criticism is unwarranted, and that the instruction means that, if the jury are satisfied from the evidence as to the truth of the facts narrated, then they should acquit the defendant, or that, if the evidence only raises a reasonable doubt as to whether the defendant killed the deceased under such circumstances, they should acquit the defendant. The use of the following language is also criticised: "If from the nature of the attack a person of ordinary courage, judgment and observation, in the position of the defendant," and it is said that it is prejudicial to the defendant, because it requires the defendant, when unlawfully attacked, to use ordinary courage instead of ordinary prudence. We do not think that this instruction is erroneous in this regard. While the expression "a person of ordinary prudence" is often used in this connection, the use of the expression "a reasonable person of ordinary courage, judgment and observation" describes merely an ordinary man, and is only another form of words conveying substantially the same idea, which is that the defendant was only held to the exercise of the same degree of reason, bravery, judgment and discretion as that of the average individual. *State v. Crawford*, 66 Ia. 318.

2. The fourteenth instruction is, in substance, to the effect that, if the jury believe beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant was the first aggressor, and if a person in the position of deceased would have been justified in believing there was a design on the part of the defendant to take his life, and in believing himself in danger of his life, and that, under such circumstances, the deceased shot at the defendant, such shooting, under such circumstances, would be no justification for the defendant to return the fire and kill the deceased, on the ground that

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it was done in self-defense. Since the evidence is not before us, we are unable to tell whether or not this instruction was based thereupon; but, since nothing appears to the contrary, we must presume that the circumstances in evidence justified its giving, and we cannot say that as an abstract proposition of law it is erroneous. If the evidence showed that the defendant was the aggressor to such an extent that the deceased was justified in shooting at him under the apparent necessity of preserving his own life, such shooting alone would be no justification for the killing of the deceased.

3. The twentieth instruction is also assailed as being an invasion of the province of the jury. This instruction is as follows: "It is your duty carefully to scrutinize and dispassionately weigh the testimony of all the witnesses, giving to the several parts of the evidence such weight as, in your judgment, they should receive. Weight of evidence depends upon the credibility of witnesses, their accuracy of observing and remembering, their interest, bias, or prejudice, if any, and their means of knowing the matters concerning which they testify. You are the sole judges of the credibility of the witnesses. You are not bound to accept as true any statement, simply because it is sworn to by the greater number of witnesses, nor are you bound to accept the testimony of any of the witnesses as absolutely true, if, for any good reason, it appears unreliable or untrue. Yet, you have no right to reject the testimony of any of the witnesses without good reason, and should not do so until you find it irreconcilable with other testimony which you find to be true." The last sentence is the one to which exception is taken and which is claimed to be erroneous. That part of the instruction objected to is not free from ground for criticism, but, in the absence of the testimony, we cannot discern in what manner the defendant was prejudiced thereby.

4. Complaint is made because instruction numbered 13, requested by the defendant, was refused. This instruction refers to something that apparently had been said in

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the argument of counsel, and, since the argument has not been preserved, we cannot presume that it was unwarranted. The presumption is that it was properly refused, and, in the absence of a showing to the contrary, we must so hold. The judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**MARHTA C. LAWRIE V. LININGER & METCALF COMPANY.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,238.

**Trial: Review.** Upon an examination of the record, it is held that the matters in issue were fairly submitted to the jury upon the evidence.

**ERROR to the district court for Thayer county: LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

***M. S. Gray, Charles H. Sloan and F. W. Sloan,* for plaintiff in error.**

***R. S. Mockett, T. O. Marshall, W. J. Birkner and O. C. Torgerson,* contra.**

**AMES, C.**

Lininger & Metcalf Company, plaintiff below, was a corporation engaged in the sale of agricultural implements and machinery at Omaha, Nebraska, and the defendant below, Martha C. Lawrie, was its agent for the sale of such goods at Davenport, Nebraska, her husband, J. W. Lawrie, having general charge and conduct of her business. One Vanskiver made a written order or application for the purchase of a threshing machine outfit for the specified price, in the aggregate, of \$1,072, with a direction that the same should be shipped to him at Davenport by rail and in the care of the defendant Martha C. Lawrie. The order or application was for-

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warded to the plaintiff, and the machinery shipped in compliance therewith, but was lost or destroyed in course of transportation by means of a railroad wreck. At the suggestion of the plaintiff and by agreement between it and J. W. Lawrie, the latter presented a claim in the name of the defendant against the railroad company for the value of the machine, and received from that company on account of the transaction \$882 which was turned over to the defendant, but no part of which has been remitted to the plaintiff. This action was brought by a petition alleging a sale and delivery of the property by the plaintiff to the defendant for the agreed price of \$1,072, and giving the defendant credit on account of the sale for several items, aggregating \$380.15, and praying for judgment for a balance of \$691.15. The items conceded by the petition as credits were certain sums in the nature of discounts from the sale price of the machine, an item of commission on the sale of another machine sold to Vanskiver to replace the one destroyed, and a balance due from the plaintiff to the defendant on general account arising out of unspecified transactions. The answer denies each and every allegation in the petition, except as specifically admitted to be true, but makes no specific admission, except that the plaintiff is indebted to the defendant in an item of \$69.70 credited in the petition, but denies that this indebtedness accrued in the manner alleged in the petition, and alleges that the plaintiff is indebted to the defendant in the sum of \$189.72 "on general account," making a total of \$259.42, for which judgment is prayed as upon a set-off. There is no reply in the record, but the case seems to have been tried as though there had been one, and no advantage because of its absence is sought in this court. There was a trial to a jury, which resulted in a verdict for the plaintiff for the sum sued for, with interest, and the defendant prosecutes error.

No evidence was offered by either party touching the items of credits and set-off, but the whole controversy at

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the trial seems to have been over the question whether the transaction between the parties, considered as a whole, did not amount to, and was not treated and understood by them as, a sale and delivery of the machine by the plaintiff to Mrs. Lawrie instead of to Vanskiver, whose name alone was signed to the written order or application for it. It is not contended that that issue was not fairly submitted by the court to the jury by instructions, except that the defendant complains in this proceeding that the court refused to instruct the jury, in effect, that the transaction did not amount to a sale, unless the defendant had been shown by the evidence to have authorized her husband to present the claim in her name as owner of the machinery against the railroad company. But it appears that the defendant knew of the transaction at the time, or soon after, and apparently acquiesced in it, the money derived from it finally coming into her hands, and the court instructed the jury generally that the defendant was not bound by any act of her husband as her agent which it did not appear from the evidence that he had authority from her to do, and we think the defendant was not entitled to have the particular act in question singled out and dwelt upon as though the right of recovery was solely dependent upon previous express authority for doing it. It was proper, we think, that the jury should be instructed, as was done, to consider all the evidence touching the relations and conduct of the parties having a tendency to show their intentions and their contract obligations, if any, implied thereby.

We recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

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W. R. GOLDIE V. A. G. STEWART ET AL.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,050.

**Process: AMENDMENT: ELECTION.** Where a plaintiff in an action is given leave to amend a defective affidavit for service by publication and a defective return of a service of summons, but fails to make such amendment, he will be deemed to have elected to stand on the original affidavit of publication and the original return of summons.

**ERROR to the district court for Dixon county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

***F. A. McMaster and Joy & Burton, for plaintiff in error.***

***McCarthy & McCarthy, contra.***

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an action to foreclose a real estate mortgage on certain lands situated in Dixon county, Nebraska. The petition was sufficient in form, and service by publication was asked for against defendants William A. Dean and Emma E. Dean, his wife, who were the owners of the lands in controversy. An affidavit for service by publication, alleging that William A. Dean and Emma E. Dean were nonresidents of the state of Nebraska, was filed by C. L. Joy, one of the attorneys for the plaintiff, and was subscribed and sworn to before F. A. McMaster, a notary public of Dixon county, who was also an attorney for the plaintiff. On this affidavit a summons, returnable on the 23d day of February, 1903, was issued to the sheriff of Dixon county, who thereupon deputized Frank A. Blanchard of Sioux City, Iowa, to serve the same on the defendants, who were residents of the state of Iowa. By this summons defendants were required to answer the plaintiff's petition on the 16th day of March, 1903. On the 11th day of February, 1903, this summons was returned, verified in the following manner:

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"Subscribed and sworn to before me and in my presence on this 11th day of February, 1903. (Seal.) C. L. Joy,  
Notary Public."

Defendants William A. Dean and Emma E. Dean filed a special appearance, excepting to the jurisdiction of the court, on the 14th day of March, 1903. This special appearance attacked the sufficiency of the affidavit for service by publication, the sufficiency of the return to the service of summons, and the sufficiency of the copy of summons served upon defendants. The motion was supported by the affidavits of defendants, to which the copy of summons was attached. On the 11th day of May, 1903, before the exceptions to the jurisdiction by defendants had been disposed of, the plaintiff filed a motion, asking leave of the court to amend his affidavit for notice by publication for the reason that the record shows that the affidavit on file was sworn to before one of the attorneys in the case. He also asked leave to amend the return of Frank A. Blanchard to the service of summons by having the return verified before an officer duly authorized to administer the oath. The motion further asked that all these entries be made *nunc pro tunc*. The special appearance and the motion to amend the affidavit and the return of the service of summons were considered together at the time the leave was asked, and the court found that the affidavit for publication was defective and voidable, that the return of the officer to service of summons was insufficient, that the copy of summons served upon said defendants was not properly certified by the seal of the clerk of the district court for Dixon county, and that the court was without jurisdiction of the persons of defendants William A. Dean and Emma E. Dean. The court also entered the following judgment and finding on plaintiff's motion to amend the process: "Plaintiff's motion to amend his affidavit for publication and return of officer *nunc pro tunc* coming on to be heard contemporaneously with special appearance is overruled; but plaintiff is given leave to amend both affidavit

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and return of summons." Plaintiff never tendered an amended affidavit and return, but, instead, prosecuted error from this order to this court. His petition in error was dismissed in an unofficial opinion reported in 5 Neb. (Unof.) 523, on the ground that the order quashing the service was not a final order. At a subsequent term of the district court held on June 6, 1904, the plaintiff appeared by his attorney and asked for a default against defendants William A. Dean and wife. The motion was refused by the trial court on his own instance, and plaintiff offered to introduce testimony against these defendants tending to show their liability. This offer was denied by the court for the reason that he had no jurisdiction of the persons of these defendants, and the court thereupon dismissed the plaintiff's petition as to defendants William A. Dean and Emma E. Dean. To reverse this judgment plaintiff brings error to this court.

Plaintiff's contention is that, while the process by which he sought to obtain jurisdiction of defendants Dean and wife was defective, yet it was voidable and not void, and therefore he should have been permitted to amend his process by a *nunc pro tunc* entry made in the first instance. Even if this contention should be deemed meritorious, for the sake of the argument, we are still unable to see how plaintiff has placed himself in a position to complain of the action of the trial court in refusing to make a *nunc pro tunc* entry in connection with his leave to amend. By our former decision of this case, we held that the refusal to allow the amendment of the process *nunc pro tunc* was not a final order which could be reviewed by this court. Now, when the mandate accompanying this decision was returned, plaintiff did not tender any amended affidavit for publication or any amended return of service of summons, but, on the contrary, he moved for a default against the defendants on the process which had been quashed by the court. Defendants properly made no further appearance in the case. While, as contended by counsel for plaintiff in error, the same

liberal rule that applies to amendments of pleadings under the code is ordinarily applied to amendments to process, it is also true that, when leave to amend a process is granted and no amendment is made, the party will be deemed to have elected to stand on the original process, the same as he would on an original pleading which he had failed to amend after leave to do so was granted. Under this rule, plaintiff stood asking for a default on a defective process, which had been successfully attacked by special appearance before answer day. Consequently, he is in no position to complain of the action of the trial court in denying his motion for a default, or in refusing to admit evidence tending to show the liability of the defendants, or in dismissing the action as to them.

It is urged by plaintiff in error that, unless he had been permitted to amend his process *nunc pro tunc*, his cause of action would have been barred by the statute of limitations, and that an amendment as of the date at which leave to amend was granted would have availed him nothing as against such a plea. Be this as it may, there is no way by which we have a right to anticipate what defense defendants would have interposed against plaintiff's prayer for a foreclosure of the mortgage, had they been legally served. They might have pleaded the statute of limitations, or they might have pleaded payment of the indebtedness, or they might have denied the execution of the mortgage; and whether or not the refusal to allow the amendment of the process *nunc pro tunc*, if error at all, was prejudicial to plaintiff could only be determined after defendants were properly in court and had pleaded to the cause. Plaintiff should have amended his process so as to give the court jurisdiction over the persons of the defendants, and, having done so, if they pleaded the statute of limitations as a defense, he could then have insisted on his right, if he had any, to have the amendment relate back to the date of the original process. If the court had refused him such right, and sustained the defense of limitation and rendered a judgment in favor of the defendants

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on such plea, then plaintiff would have had a final order of the court prejudicial to his right, which he could have presented for review. But, having tendered no amendment, his right to a default stands on the validity of his original process.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**DAVID BRADLEY & COMPANY, APPELLEE, v. UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY, APPELLANT.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,080.

Specific performance of a contract for the sale of real estate will not be awarded at the suit of the vendee or his assignee, where the evidence discloses gross laches in making the payments stipulated for in the contract, where time is made of the essence of the contract by the agreement of the parties.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
WILLIS G. SEARS, JUDGE. *Reversed and dismissed.*

*John N. Baldwin and Edson Rich, for appellant.*

*Flickinger Bros. and Baldrige & De Bord, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an action for specific performance of certain land contracts entered into by the Union Pacific Railway Company with one Michael O'Neill, and assigned by him to plaintiff, David Bradley & Company, to secure an indebtedness from O'Neill to the plaintiff. There was a trial of the issues to the court, and a judgment for the

plaintiff, and a finding that plaintiff was entitled to a specific performance of the contracts sued upon; that the value of plaintiff's interest in the contracts was equal to the amount of the indebtedness which the contracts were given to secure, and a decree that, if the defendant should pay the amount of plaintiff's debt and interest within 20 days of the judgment, the lien should be canceled and satisfied, and that, if defendant should fail to pay the indebtedness for more than 20 days from the date of the judgment, plaintiff should be decreed a specific performance of the contracts on payment of the amounts found due thereon from plaintiff. To reverse this judgment defendant has appealed to this court.

The facts underlying the controversy are that on the 31st day of May, 1884, the Union Pacific Railway Company sold to Michael O'Neill two sections of railroad land in Deuel county, Nebraska, the sale being evidenced by eight separate contracts, each for a particular quarter section of the land. These contracts provided for the payment of the purchase price in ten equal annual payments, with interest on the deferred payments. The contracts contained, among others, the following condition: "And it is hereby agreed and covenanted by the parties hereto that time and punctuality are material and essential ingredients of this contract, and in case the second party shall fail to make the payments aforesaid, and each of them, punctually, and on the strict terms and times above limited, and likewise to perform and complete all and each of his agreements and stipulations aforesaid strictly and literally, without any failure or default, then this contract, so far as it shall bind said first party, shall become utterly null and void, and all rights and interests hereby created or then existing in favor of or derived from the second party, shall utterly cease and determine." O'Neill made the first payment on these contracts in cash and three subsequent payments for the years 1886, 1887, and 1888 and no other payments have ever been made on the contracts. On the 25th of February, 1886, O'Neill,

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with the consent of the railway company, assigned the contracts in dispute to Charles A. Wilson, of Chicago, Illinois, as collateral security for the sum of \$2,900 owed him by O'Neill, and on the 14th day of October, 1892, O'Neill made a conveyance of his interest in the contracts in dispute to plaintiff David Bradley & Company, to secure an indebtedness of \$957.75 owed to said company. This instrument was made subject by its terms to the prior assignment of the contracts to Charles A. Wilson, and was duly recorded in Deuel county. After O'Neill ceased making payments on the contracts in issue, the railway company corresponded with Charles A. Wilson and urged him to make the deferred payments on the land. After considerable correspondence with Wilson and after one of the employees of the railway company had called personally upon him, Wilson, not caring to make any further payments to protect his security, returned the contracts to the company, with a letter urging it to give O'Neill until the 15th of August, 1893, either to pay up all the contracts or to make payments as he was able on a portion of them. In response to this request, the company refrained from canceling any of the contracts when received. O'Neill, however, never made, nor attempted to make, any further payments on any of the contracts. The company then made an effort to get the plaintiff, David Bradley & Company, to pay the balance due on the contracts. In 1896 the plaintiff wrote to the land department of the Union Pacific Railway Company to get the amount of the indebtedness on the contracts. The railway company informed plaintiff of the amount due, in a letter stating that on the receipt of the amount a deed to the land would be issued to the plaintiff. It appears that on the receipt of this information plaintiff sent one of its traveling agents to examine the land and report its probable value; but, when the report was received, the plaintiff, as it claims, declined to pay on the contracts and take a deed, because it feared that the receivers of the Union Pacific Railway Company had not sufficient au-

thority to execute a valid conveyance. After this the employees of the railway company's land department made several requests to plaintiff to complete the contracts and notified plaintiff that the contracts would be canceled if they were not paid.

In 1899 the Union Pacific Railway Company was succeeded in the ownership and control of the railway system and the lands in dispute by the Union Pacific Railroad Company, which company canceled the contracts, and sold the land to William Law on the 18th day of October, 1899. Later William Law assigned his contracts of purchase to James G. Piercy, the present owner, whom plaintiff attempted to make a party defendant in the present suit. On February 23, 1901, plaintiff by its attorneys, sent the following communication to the railroad company: "Feb. 23, 1901. B. McAllister, Esq., Land Commissioner, U. P. Ry., Omaha, Neb. Dear Sir: Our clients, David Bradley & Co., in 1892, procured an assignment of the contracts of one M. O'Neill to sections one and thirteen in Twp. 12, R. 44, Deuel county, Nebraska, which assignment was placed of record in Deuel county and recorded in book 1, page 211. The contracts number from 78,703 to 78,776, and from 75,307 to 75,310, inclusive, and were made to secure to David Bradley & Co. the sum of \$957.75, due on said date. They wish to redeem and pay the balance due on the O'Neill contracts to your company and receive from it a deed for the property. Please advise us as to what amount will be necessary to redeem one or both of said sections under the O'Neill contracts, and oblige, yours very truly, Flickinger Bros." The railroad company replied to this letter, as follows: "Omaha, Neb., Feb. 25, 1901. Messrs. Flickinger Bros., Council Bluffs, Iowa. Gentlemen: In reply to your favor of the 23d inst., would say, that Sec. 13-12-44 has been sold and contract is in good standing, and Sec. 1 is for sale at \$1.75 per acre, as per terms on inclosed slip. Yours truly, B. A. McAllister, Land Com'r." After this correspondence the present suit was instituted.

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There are many reasons, in our view, why the judgment of the district court in this cause should not stand, one of which, however, will suffice for the conclusion reached. By the terms of the contracts of purchase of the lands in controversy, time and punctuality of payment are made of the essence of the agreement. While it is true, as contended by counsel for appellee, that forfeitures are never favored, either in equity or at law, and while it is also true that very slight proof will be held sufficient to show a waiver as to the date of payment on a contract of purchase of real estate, because of the disfavor in which forfeitures are regarded in courts of equity, yet this rule is always made to depend on a showing of diligence in fact by the vendee in making the payments and the further showing of a reasonable excuse for the failure of a strict compliance with the letter of the contract. This principle is clearly set forth in 1 Story, *Equity Jurisprudence* (12th ed.), sec. 776, as follows: "It is true that courts of equity have regard to time, so far as it respects the good faith and diligence of the parties. But if circumstances of a reasonable nature have disabled the party from a strict compliance, or if he comes, *recenti facto*, to ask for a specific performance, the suit is treated with indulgence, and generally with favor by the court. But then, in such cases, it should be clear that the remedies are mutual; that there has been no change of circumstances affecting the character or justice of the contract; that compensation for the delay can be fully and beneficially given; that he who asks a specific performance is in a condition to perform his own part of the contract; and that he has shown himself ready, desirous, prompt, and eager to perform the contract. Even where time is of the essence of the contract, it may be waived by proceeding in the purchase after the time has elapsed; and if time was not originally made by the parties of the essence of the contract, yet it may become so by notice, if the other party is afterwards guilty of improper delays in completing the purchase." This doctrine has been recognized and approved by this court in our

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holdings in *McAusland v. Pundt*, 1 Neb. 211; *Morgan v. Bergen*, 3 Neb. 209; *Canfield v. Tillotson*, 25 Neb. 857; *Brown v. Ulrich*, 48 Neb. 409; *Whiteman v. Perkins*, 56 Neb. 181, and *Jewett v. Black*, 60 Neb. 173.

Now, under the undisputed facts in the case at bar, plaintiff took an assignment of O'Neill's interest in the contracts in issue, subject to Wilson's lien of \$2,900 in 1892, for collateral security of a *bona fide* indebtedness existing between O'Neill and plaintiff. Under this assignment plaintiff had a right to discharge the Wilson lien and to protect its security by making the deferred payments on the contracts. Diligence in business would have suggested that, when the assignment was taken by the plaintiff, it should have inquired as to the condition of the payments, for a default of which a forfeiture was provided by the plain terms of the contracts; but it apparently made no such inquiry at the time it received the assignment. This tardiness of inquiry is sought to be explained by saying that the plaintiff naturally thought that O'Neill or Wilson would make the payments as they came due. If we should accept this wholly unsatisfactory excuse for the want of any inquiry at that time, we are next confronted with the fact that in 1896, eight years after the contracts were subject to forfeiture for nonpayment of six out of ten instalments due thereon, plaintiff did make inquiry as to the exact status of the contracts, and received the information asked for from the land department of the railroad company, with an offer, even at that late date, to make plaintiff a deed to the land if it would pay the amount then due. And, again, for two years after this communication the agents of the company frequently requested plaintiff to comply with the belated terms of payment, and plaintiff continued to neglect the offer, claiming as an excuse for its gross laches that it doubted the authority of the receivers in charge of the property to make a valid conveyance of the lands. Now, if we were content to treat this latter excuse as a reasonable and conscientious explanation of plaintiff's delay, we are still con-

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fronted with the further fact that from 1899 down to the date of the letter set forth in the opinion plaintiff still continued to sleep on its rights, even after the lands had passed to the defendant, whose authority to make a conveyance thereof is not and cannot be questioned.

From all these facts we are compelled to find that plaintiff has been guilty of gross laches in protecting its security against the overdue payments on the contracts, during a period of nine years, and we are unable to resist the suggestion that, but for the recent rise in value of lands in western Nebraska, this suit would never have been instituted. Here is a fair portrayal of plaintiff's diligence, as reflected from the record. While the gates of opportunity stood long ajar for the full protection of its security, it doubted the quality of mercy offered, and slumbered and slept. When all reasonable doubt as to the authority to make the conveyance was removed by the purchase of the property by the defendant, it turned over, and continued to snore, and nothing but the powerful restorative of a sudden rise in the price of western lands sufficed to arouse it from its Rip Van Winkle sleep.

Finding no equity or conscience in the bill, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the plaintiff's petition dismissed.

AMES and EPPERSON, CO., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the plaintiff's petition be dismissed.

REVERSED.

**JOHN A. McCREARY ET AL., APPELLANTS, V. JOHN A.  
CREIGHTON ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,108.

1. Case Followed. *Shelby v. Creighton*, 65 Neb. 485, approved and followed so far as applicable to the present issues.
2. Infants: JUDGEMENT: VACATING: LIMITATIONS. A judgment of a court of competent jurisdiction against a minor defendant properly served and represented will not be set aside on account of the minority of the defendant, unless the action for that purpose is commenced within one year after the minor arrives at the age of twenty-one years, as provided in section 442 of the code; after that time a judgment against a minor defendant will be set aside only for such causes as are sufficient to set aside a judgment against an adult.
3. ——: JUDGMENT. A minor, suing as a plaintiff on a cause of action, will be bound by the judgment rendered therein the same as an adult would be, if the suit was brought and prosecuted in good faith for the minor's benefit.
4. Judgment: RES JUDICATA. Prior judgment rendered in the matter of the estates of Edward Creighton and of Mary Lucretia Creighton, and pleaded as a defense in this action, examined, and held to constitute a bar to the cause of action instituted by the plaintiffs herein.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
**ALEXANDER C. TROUP, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*Henry P. Stoddart*, for appellants.

*Woolworth & McHugh, J. J. O'Connor and J. A. O. Kennedy, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

Plaintiffs in this action are four of the six surviving children of Mary A. McCreary, and as such children are legatees of the will of Mary Lucretia Creighton, wife of Edward Creighton, deceased. They bring this action for an accounting against John A. Creighton, as administrator of the estate of Edward Creighton, and against John

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A. Creighton, Hermann Kountz, and James Creighton, as executors and trustees of the will of Mary Lucretia Creighton. The other two surviving children of Mary A. McCreary having refused to join as plaintiffs in the action were named as defendants. There was a trial of the issues before one of the judges of the district court for Douglas county, Nebraska, and a judgment in favor of defendants, from which plaintiffs have appealed to this court.

A suit, involving practically the same issues and instituted by Mary B. Shelby, daughter and only child of Joseph Creighton, and likewise a legatee of the will of Mary Lucretia Creighton, was before this court for review and adjudication in the case of *Shelby v. Creighton*, 65 Neb. 485, to which reference will be made as to such of the issues as are common to the two cases.

The facts underlying the controversy are that on the 5th day of November, 1874, Edward Creighton, a resident of Douglas county, died, intestate, seized and possessed of a very valuable estate of both personality and realty. John A. Creighton was duly appointed and qualified as administrator of the estate in Nebraska. Deceased left a widow, Mary Lucretia Creighton, but no children surviving him, and, according to the laws of this state, the personality all descended to the widow. On January 23, 1876, Mary Lucretia Creighton, widow of Edward Creighton, died testate, leaving a will, which was duly admitted to probate in Douglas county, and in which John A. Creighton, Hermann Kountz, and James Creighton were named as executors and trustees of the funds of the estate. By this will, about three-twentieths of the estate was to be held in trust by the executors of the will and the interest thereon was to be paid to Mary A. McCreary, sister of Edward Creighton, during her life, and at her death the trust funds were to be distributed among her children on their coming of age. Mary A. McCreary departed this life on November 15, 1898.

At the time of his death, Edward Creighton was pos-

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sessed of an interest in the partnership firm, known as "Edward Creighton & Company," which owned a large herd of cattle and horses and ranch furniture and fixtures in the state of Wyoming. On the 19th day of January, 1875, one Charles H. Hutton applied to the probate court of Albany county, Wyoming, for letters of ancillary administration on the estate of the intestate situated in the territory, now state, of Wyoming. At this time Thomas A. McShane, a member of the partnership firm, was in possession of the herd of cattle in Wyoming, and resisted the application of Hutton for letters of administration, claiming the right, under the statutes of Wyoming, to administer upon the estate as a surviving partner of the firm. The provisions of the statutes of Wyoming, under which this application was made and granted, are set out in the opinion in *Shelby v. Creighton, supra*, and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that McShane filed his bond, which was duly approved, and entered upon the administration of the affairs of the partnership and continued such administration until the year 1877. The letters of administration issued to Hutton were revoked by a final order of the supreme court of the territory of Wyoming. On the 16th day of January, 1877, an application was made by McShane and other surviving partners for an order of the court to sell the partnership property in the city of Cheyenne on the 25th day of January following. When this sale was had, John A. Creighton, through his confidential clerk, bid the sum of \$75,000 for the property, and, being the highest bidder, the property was sold to him. The sale was duly reported to the Wyoming court and was confirmed. Thomas A. McShane was appointed administrator *de bonis non* of the estate of Edward Creighton situate in Wyoming, and received from himself, as such administrator, the proceeds of the sale of the property and transmitted the same, by order of the Wyoming court, to John A. Creighton, the local administrator of the estate in Douglas county, who likewise transmitted the proceeds of the sale to the executors and trustees of the

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will of Mary Lucretia Creighton. The executors and trustees then distributed the proceeds of the sale according to the provisions of the will. Thomas A. McShane thereafter made a final settlement of the estate of Edward Creighton in the territory of Wyoming and procured his discharge as administrator.

Thereafter, on the 8th day of April, 1879, John A. Creighton filed in the county court of Douglas county a final account of his doings as administrator of the estate of Edward Creighton, and asked for an allowance of the account and for his final discharge as such administrator. On the 10th day of May, 1879, Mary A. McCreary appeared by her attorney and filed her objections to the allowance of this account. An amendatory and supplementary account was filed by the administrator on November 17, 1879, and on the first day of March, 1880, Mary A. McCreary filed objections to the amended and supplementary account. Upon the hearing of the objections, the court found that several of the interested parties were not before the court, and accordingly ordered that a suit be brought in a court of competent jurisdiction, to which all parties in interest should be made parties, for the determination of the issues arising on the objections to the final account of the administrator. On December 2, 1880, in compliance with this order, Mrs. McCreary, for herself and all others similarly situated, instituted a suit, involving the identical issues now sought to be relitigated by her children, in the district court for Douglas county. Mr. McCreary, father of the plaintiffs, appeared as next friend of all the children, and on his application they were made parties plaintiff in the action. The coexecutors of John A. Creighton, namely, Hermann Kountz and James Creighton, also appeared by their attorney as parties plaintiff in the cause. During the pendency of this suit, it appears that John A. Creighton paid \$50,000 to Mrs. McCreary in compromise of her claim against him, and this sum was added to the trust fund of her estate and subsequently distributed. The case, however, proceeded

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to judgment, and, as appears from the record, all the testimony taken was considered by the court and the cause was argued by counsel for plaintiffs and defendant, and the court on full consideration of the issues found in favor of the defendant and rendered judgment on such finding on the 2d day of April, 1883. In the same year the final account of John A. Creighton, as administrator of the estate of Edward Creighton, was allowed and he was discharged by the probate court. In this proceeding, also, the plaintiffs were represented by a duly appointed guardian *ad litem*. No appeal was ever taken from either of these orders or judgments, and no suit was instituted to reopen these judgments until 1902, when the instant suit was filed.

In June, 1882, the trustees of the will of Mary L. Creighton tendered their resignation to the district court for Douglas county. Mary A. McCreary and all her children were made parties defendant in this suit, and a guardian *ad litem* was appointed for the minor defendants. Mrs. McCreary and her children in this action filed a petition, asking that John McCreary, plaintiffs' father, be appointed trustee of Mrs. McCreary's interest in the estate, instead of those resigning. After proof as to a proper administration of the trust was taken, the trustees were discharged, and John McCreary was appointed in their stead. John McCreary accordingly executed his bond and proceeded with the administration of the trust. The youngest of the plaintiffs arrived at majority on August 18, 1893, a little more than nine years before this suit was instituted. In the year 1893, the father, as trustee, made a distribution among the children according to the terms of the will. On January 10, 1895, plaintiffs and the other children of Mrs. McCreary, all being of full age, joined in signing a release of the sureties on the bond of their father as trustee of their interests in Mrs. Creighton's will.

Now, the questions which we are asked to readjudicate are: First, as to the validity of the proceedings of the probate court of Wyoming in the ancillary administration

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of the estate in that territory by Thomas A. McShane; and, second, as to the validity of the purchase of the herd of cattle by John A. Creighton. Both of these questions were before this court in *Shelby v. Creighton, supra*, and with reference to the first it was there said:

"The decree of the probate court of Albany county, Wyoming, settling and allowing the account of T. A. McShane as surviving partner, is analogous to a decree settling and allowing the final account of an administrator. Such decrees are conclusive, upon all parties, of every matter involved, until reversed or set aside in a direct proceeding. \* \* \* The decree settling and allowing the final account of T. A. McShane as surviving partner, while a part of the probate proceedings, was in effect an adjustment of the partnership accounts, and necessarily involved the question of his relation to the firm. \* \* \* In our opinion, the decree is as conclusive upon that proposition as one adjusting the accounts between partners, entered by a court of equity in a suit between partners, brought for that purpose would be."

With reference to the bid of John A. Creighton, the Nebraska administrator, it was held that at most the sale under this bid was only voidable, and that an affirmation of the sale would be implied by an unreasonable delay of the *cestuis que trust* in disaffirming it.

We are next asked to examine the facts as to whether there was but one herd of cattle owned by the firm of Edward Creighton & Company, or whether there were two herds, as alleged by the plaintiffs, with the situs of one in Wyoming and the other in Nebraska. While this question seems to have been adverted to in the opinion in *Shelby v. Creighton, supra*, yet, as the testimony in that case is not before us, we will examine it in the light of the evidence contained in the bill of exceptions. The evidence, we think, clearly shows that there was but one herd of cattle and but one brand used by the firm of Edward Creighton & Company. The home ranch was located in Wyoming. It is true that at times portions of this herd

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of cattle would stray eastward over the line and into this state, and it is true, as shown by the testimony, that some of these cattle were from time to time assessed for taxation in Cheyenne county, Nebraska, the boundaries of which county then extended to the Wyoming line. It is also true that a side ranch, or corral, was used by this company on Pumpkin Creek, in Nebraska; but the evidence clearly shows that this was merely an auxiliary to the home ranch, that herders were sent to this side ranch to round up the cattle that had drifted eastward into Nebraska, and that all of the business of the company was transacted from the home ranch in Wyoming. We have examined the testimony on this question, notwithstanding the fact that the identical question as to the existence of a herd of cattle in Nebraska belonging to this company was passed upon by the county court of Douglas county on the objections to the approval of the final report of John A. Creighton, as administrator, and was also passed upon specifically in the judgment and finding of the district court for Douglas county in the suit of Mary A. McCreary and others, referred to in the statement of this cause. There is no sufficient evidence in the record to show fraud or collusion in procuring any of the various judgments above set forth, all of which have been pleaded in bar of the present action. In the suit which Mary A. McCreary filed in the district court for Douglas county, these plaintiffs were impleaded as parties plaintiff by their father as next friend, and in every suit in which they were defendants they were represented by a competent, honorable, and learned member of the bar as guardian *ad litem*.

It is suggested that all these plaintiffs were minors when all these proceedings were had, except the one in which they released the bond of their father as trustee of their mother's portion of the estate of Mrs. Creighton. A judgment against a minor may be set aside on a slight showing of defense, where the application is made for that purpose within one year of the time the minor reaches the age of 21 years, as provided for in section 442 of the code. After

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this period has expired, practically the same showing must be made to set aside a judgment rendered against a minor as is required when the judgment is rendered against one of full age. Now, while all of the judgments pleaded in bar, except one, were rendered against plaintiffs while they were minor defendants, yet in each of these cases the estate under which they claim was properly represented, and a judgment binding upon the estate is, of necessity, binding upon all shares of such estate bequeathed to residuary legatees. The general rule is that, when minors are plaintiffs in a cause of action and the suit is brought and prosecuted in good faith for their benefit, they will be bound by the judgment the same as adults would be. *Kingsbury v. Buckner*, 134 U. S. 650, and *Corker v. Jones*, 110 U. S. 317.

Against the judgment in the case in which these minors were plaintiffs, it is suggested that the minors did not know that the mother had received the \$50,000, "peace money," from defendant John A. Creighton during the pendency of the suit. And from this fact they ask us to infer that the proceeding in the district court was a mere sham trial and not a good-faith judgment. This \$50,000 was carried forward into the trust funds of the estate and was distributed as such by the executors, and plaintiffs have all participated in their share of the distribution. This judgment has stood unassailed for 20 years, for 14 years after the eldest, and nine years after the youngest plaintiff had reached their majority.

We think, in view of these facts, that plaintiffs are clearly estopped, not only by the judgments pleaded in bar of this action, but also by their own laches in bringing this suit. We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

## G. SAM ROGERS V. CITY OF OMAHA.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,221.

1. Cases Distinguished. *Hurford v. City of Omaha*, 4 Neb. 336, *Goodrich v. City of Omaha*, 10 Neb. 98, *McGavock v. City of Omaha*, 40 Neb. 64, examined, approved and distinguished.
2. Cities: CONTRACTS: LIABILITY. Where a municipal corporation receives and retains substantial benefits under a contract which it was authorized to make, but which was void because irregularly executed, it is liable in an action brought to recover the reasonable value of the benefits received. *Lincoln Land Co. v. Village of Grant*, 57 Neb. 70, followed and approved.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: HOWARD KENNEDY, JR., JUDGE. Reversed.

W. A. Saunders and Fawcett & Abbott, for plaintiff in error.

John P. Breen, W. H. Herdman and A. G. Ellick, contra.

## OLDHAM, C.

This was an action brought by the plaintiff in the court below against the city of Omaha to recover a balance alleged to be due on a contract for grading Mason street, between Eleventh and Thirteenth streets in said city; entered into between defendant city and plaintiff's assignors, Cash Brothers. The petition discloses that the balance sued for represents the amount unpaid upon certain warrants issued to the plaintiff's assignors, drawn against a fund which the city undertook to create by special assessment upon the property abutting upon the street graded. This assessment had been declared null and void before the institution of this suit. The city answered, pleading that the contract sued upon was *ultra vires* and void, that by the terms of the contract plaintiff's assignors agreed to accept the warrants in full consideration of the contract. It also pleaded the statute of limitations. On

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issues thus joined, there was a trial to the court below and judgment for the defendant. To reverse this judgment plaintiff brings error to this court.

There is practically no disputed fact in the record. In 1873, it is conceded, the grade in controversy was established by proper ordinance. In 1893 a petition asking for a change of the grade at the place mentioned, and purporting to be signed by the owners of a majority of the feet frontage of the property abutting upon the proposed change of grade, was presented to the city council, having been examined and certified to by the city engineer. In conformity with the request of the petition, an ordinance was properly enacted establishing the changed grade of the street, and, in strict formality with the provisions of the statute regulating cities of the metropolitan class, a contract was awarded to Cash Brothers, assignors of the plaintiff, on March 8, 1898. The work was completed under this contract, and was accepted and approved by the city in July, 1899. One-half of the contract price of the changed grade was paid for from the general fund of the city, and warrants were issued on a special fund to be levied on the abutting owners for the other half of the contract price of the improvement. The city made an effort to raise a fund to pay these warrants by special assessment. This special levy, however, was enjoined by one of the property owners, for the reason that the petition was not signed by the owners of a majority of the feet frontage abutting on the grade. On a trial on the injunction it was made perpetual, for the reason that a number of the signatures on the petition were made by agents of the property owners without any authority to do so. These special fund warrants were registered for payment on October 27, 1899, and payment was refused for lack of funds. This action was instituted on November 25, 1903. The trial judge to whom the issues were submitted found against the city on the plea of limitations, but held that the contract was *ultra vires* and void. The defense of limitations was practically abandoned by the city

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on the argument and in the briefs filed in this court. And we think that the ruling of the trial judge on this defense is fully sustained by the holding of this court in *City of Omaha v. Clarke*, 66 Neb. 33; *Rogers v. City of Omaha*, 75 Neb. 318.

The contention urged by the city here is that the contract for the grading was *ultra vires* and void, and, being void, it is incapable of ratification, and defendant is therefore not estopped to plead its illegality. On the other hand, the plaintiff contends that the contract was within the general powers conferred upon the municipality by the statute governing cities of the metropolitan class, and that the informality in the passage of the ordinance establishing the changed grade was a mere irregularity in the exercise of its powers actually conferred. That section 109, ch. 12a, Comp. St. 1897, in force at the time the grade was changed and the contract entered into, confers plenary powers on the mayor and council of the city in the matter of opening, grading, and repairing streets, alleys, and avenues, is without question; but the contention of the city is that so much of section 116, ch. 12a, Comp. St. 1893, as provides that "the grade of no street or part of a street shall be changed unless the consent in writing is first obtained of the owners of lots or lands abutting upon the street or part of street where such change of grade is to be made, who represent a majority of the feet front thereon, and not then until the damages to property owners which may be caused by such change of grade shall have been assessed," is a limitation on the general powers conferred. With reference to the limitation contained in section 116, *supra*, it is contended by plaintiff that it is confined to the right to levy a special assessment on property abutting on the changed grade, and is in nowise in derogation of the general powers conferred to open, widen, grade, and improve streets, alleys, and avenues, within the city. *Hurford v. City of Omaha*, 4 Neb. 336, cited by the city in support of its contention, was a case in which the objection was made to the special levy of an assessment for the cost

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of the changed grade by an abutting property owner, and, so far as this right was concerned, it was held by this court that the provision of the statute requiring a petition signed by a foot frontage majority of the owners was mandatory. There is nothing in the opinion, however, that deals with the right of the city to change a grade or to enter into a contract for such purpose by general taxation. In *Goodrich v. City of Omaha*, 10 Neb. 98, the question raised was as to the power of the city to provide a fund for paying damages occasioned by a change of the established grade of one of its streets by special assessment, and it was held in this opinion that the damages occasioned by the changed grade must be paid from the general funds of the city, and not from a special levy on abutting proprietors. *McGavock v. City of Omaha*, 40 Neb. 64, involved the right of an abutting property owner to recover in an action at law for damages occasioned by a change in the grade of the street. In the opinion it is said:

"We have no doubt that the advisability or wisdom of the establishment or change of grades are matters for the city council to pass upon, and come wholly within their province, and cannot be questioned; but with the subject of damages others are concerned and must be considered."

Plainly, in the opinions just quoted from, the limitations are regarded as safeguards to property owners from special burdens, rather than as an attempted limitation of the general powers of the mayor and council over the streets and alleys of the city.

There is a clear distinction between contracts outside of the powers conferred upon municipal corporations and contracts within the general scope of the powers conferred, but which have been irregularly exercised. Contracts falling entirely outside of the powers delegated to the corporation are absolutely null and void, and no right of action against the corporation can be founded upon them. The rule with reference to the liability of the corporation on contracts within the general scope of the powers granted, but which have been irregularly exercised, is

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well stated in 2 Dillon, Municipal Corporations (4th ed.), sec. 936, as follows: "A municipal corporation as against persons who have acted in good faith and parted with value for its benefit, cannot, \* \* \* set up mere irregularities in the exercise of power conferred; as, for example, its failure to make publication in all of the required newspapers of a resolution involving the expenditure of moneys. Such failure might have the effect to invalidate a local assessment upon the abutter, \* \* \* but as regards a *bona fide contractor with the city*, who had expended money for its benefit in respect of a matter within the scope of its general powers, the contract would not be *ultra vires* in the true sense of that term; and the city would be estopped to set up as a defense its own irregularities in the exercise of a power clearly granted to it." This doctrine is supported in an able and exhaustive opinion of the court of appeals of the state of New York, in *Moore v. Mayor*, 73 N. Y. 238, and is recognized by state courts generally. The principle has been recognized in this state in *Clark v. Saline County*, 9 Neb. 516; *Grand Island Gas Co. v. West*, 28 Neb. 852; *Second Congregational Church v. City of Omaha*, 35 Neb. 103; *Lincoln Land Co. v. Village of Grant*, 57 Neb. 70. In the latter case it is said:

"Where a municipal corporation receives and retains substantial benefits under a contract which it was authorized to make, but which was void because irregularly executed, it is liable in an action brought to recover the reasonable value of the benefits received."

The defense of payment by the delivery of the void warrants is not strongly urged in this court, nor would it profit much to urge it here. Had valid warrants been delivered against a fund created, a different proposition would be presented. But payment in void warrants is within the ban of the lesson taught by the Master, as recorded in the eleventh and twelfth verses of the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke, wherein it is said: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a

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father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?"

For the above reasons, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause be remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

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O. O. HEFNER v. ED ROBERT.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,229.

1. **Contract: TENDER: WAIVER.** When no other place is specified in a contract for a tender, the law will presume that the tender should be made at the place of the contract; but an unconditional refusal to accept the tender at any place waives the necessity for a technical tender at the place of the contract.
2. **Tender, Withdrawal of.** Where a tender other than money is made, the tenderer must, if possible, keep the property in condition to make the tender good while an action for rescission is pending. If, after making the tender, he exercises acts of ownership over the property tendered, inconsistent with the theory that he is holding the property for delivery to the party to whom it was tendered, such conduct amounts to a withdrawal of the tender.

ERROR to the district court for Otoe county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*W. H. Pitzer, William Hayward and Byron Clark, for plaintiff in error.*

*John C. Watson and E. F. Warren, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This is an action to recover on a written contract for the purchase of a horse, entered into between plaintiff and defendant, as follows: "Omaha, Neb., March 24, 1902. This contract entered into by and between Ed Robert, of Guthrie Center, Iowa, and O. O. Hefner, of Omaha, witnesseth as follows: That O. O. Hefner has this day sold the imported shire horse named 'Girton Royal Tom,' for the sum of \$1,300, upon the following terms and divisions, payable, \$800 in one coach horse, \$100 cash in hand, and \$400 due in one year, with six per cent. interest from date. This contract notes that the horse, 'Girton Royal Tom,' is blemished in hind leg. He further agrees that in case the horse does not recover from this affliction he shall be turned back to O. O. Hefner for \$600 cash in hand and Ed Robert's note of \$400 of even date herewith, due in one year at six per cent. It is further provided that if horse recovers from blemished condition of hind leg, then Ed. Robert shall pay to O. O. Hefner his promissory note of \$400. O. O. Hefner, Ed. Robert." The petition sets up that, in compliance with the foregoing contract, plaintiff tendered back to defendant the horse described therein for the reason that the horse did not recover from the blemish mentioned in the contract, and that defendant absolutely refused to accept said horse, when so tendered. The answer, in substance, admitted the contract, denied the tender, and alleged that defendant was willing to rescind the contract, if plaintiff would fulfil the terms of the contract and redeliver the horse. Plaintiff, for reply to this answer, alleged that, after the tender of the horse and the refusal of the defendant to accept the same he had given the horse away because he was of no value. On issues thus joined there was a trial to a jury in the district court for Otoe county, a verdict for the plaintiff for the amount sued for, and a judgment on the verdict. To reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

On the question of plaintiff's offer to rescind the con-

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tract and tender back the horse, and defendant's unconditional refusal to accept such offer, there was a direct and sharp conflict in the testimony. But, as this question was properly submitted to the jury, we are bound, as a reviewing court, to accept the conclusion of the triers of the fact that the offer to rescind, for the reasons contained in the contract, was made by the plaintiff and unconditionally refused by the defendant. This determined question of fact disposes of the first contention urged in defendant's brief, which is that the tender should have been made at the place of the contract. It is urged by counsel for the defendant that, when no other place is specified for a tender as antecedent to the right of rescission, the law will presume that the tender should be made at the place of the contract. We have no quarrel with this suggestion, when modified by the further doctrine that, if an unconditional refusal is made to accept the tender at any place, it is not necessary to resort to the useless formality of a technical tender at the place of the contract.

But the serious, and we think fatal, objection to plaintiff's right to recover on a rescission of the contract alleged upon is the fact that, after having made a tender of the horse in controversy, and after having been notified of defendant's refusal to accept it, plaintiff, instead of keeping himself in position to make his tender good during the pendency of the action which he instituted against the defendant, converted the tender to his own use and disposed of it, as he alleges, by giving it away to another, so that, when the trial came to a final issue, he was unable to make his tender good. When his tender was refused, if plaintiff desired to rescind the contract, it was his duty to keep the tender good, that is, to keep the property in such condition, if possible, that it might be redelivered to the owner, when the cause was finally determined. In other words, he must, from the date of his tender, treat the property as though it belonged to the party to whom it was tendered. Any act of his inconsistent with this theory amounts in law to a withdrawal of the tender.

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Hunt, Tender, secs. 448-454. *Curtiss v. Greenbacks*, 24 Vt. 536. Under this view of the case, we think that plaintiff is not entitled to recover on his petition for a rescission of the contract. He withdrew the tender by exercising acts of ownership over the horse after the tender. Having done this, he is not entitled to rescind, but must sue, if at all, for damages on the contract.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause be remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

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SAMUEL WILLMS, GUARDIAN, APPELLANT, v. GEORGE PLAMBECK, EXECUTOR, ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,144.

1. **Wills: Probate: Setting Aside: Burden of Proof.** In an action of an equitable nature to set aside the probate of a will on account of fraud, the burden of proof rests upon the applicant to show that the court admitting the will to probate was without jurisdiction, or that some wrong was committed in the proceeding, which amounts to a fraud, prejudicial to the rights of the applicant.
2. **Evidence examined, and found insufficient to support the petition.**

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
WILLIS G. SEARS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Jeffris & Howell*, for appellant.

*McCoy & Olmsted*, contra.

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EPPERSON, C.

On the 10th day of July, 1899, Peter Glandt, a citizen of Douglas county, who was then very sick and confined to his bed, executed an instrument afterwards admitted to probate as his last will and testament. He recovered from this illness, and for three years or more attended to the ordinary affairs of life. He died on January 22, 1903, leaving surviving him eight adult children, who are beneficiaries under the will, and three minor grandchildren, who were the only children of a deceased daughter. They, too, are beneficiaries under the will of their grandfather, but not to as great an extent as they would participate, had no will been made. Soon after his death a petition was filed in the county court of Douglas county for the probate of this will. Notice of this petition was published under the direction of the county court of Douglas county three successive weeks prior to the day of hearing in the Western Laborer, a weekly newspaper printed and published in said Douglas county. On the 3d day of February, 1903, the county court appointed for the three grandchildren a guardian *ad litem*, who on the same day filed a written acceptance of the appointment. On the 21st day of February, the time mentioned in said notice, the guardian *ad litem* appeared in the county court, filed his answer to the petition for probate of the will, denied that the alleged will was the last will and testament of said Peter Glandt, denied each and every allegation in said petition, and asked that the court require affirmative proof of all the matters set out and of the genuineness of said will. The county court received the evidence of but one of the three attesting witnesses, and admitted the will to probate. Subsequently, appellant was appointed guardian of the three grandchildren, and as such guardian, on the 16th day of July, 1903, instituted this action in the county court to set aside and annul the probate of the will. From the judgment of the county court an appeal was taken to

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the district court for Douglas county, and a trial had, resulting in a dismissal of appellant's cause.

The action is equitable in its nature. In his petition appellant alleged that the notice for the probate of the will was published in an obscure paper, printed and published in the city of Omaha and circulating almost exclusively in the labor circles, and having no circulation in the vicinity where his wards reside; that the selection of the guardian *ad litem* was at the instigation of the proponent, and that the appointment prior to the completion of the notice was without jurisdiction and void; that the court had no jurisdiction to admit the will to probate as he did upon the evidence of only one of the three attesting witnesses, the guardian *ad litem* having filed his answer as above shown; and further alleged that said purported will, when the same was presented for probate, was mutilated and destroyed, in that a part of the fourth sheet constituting said will was torn off; that deceased had revoked and destroyed said will by erasing his name therefrom by running a heavy ink line through his name; and that he was the victim of undue influence exerted by some of his children, beneficiaries under said will; and also alleged that the guardian *ad litem* made no investigation concerning the execution of said will, nor the rights of said minors. The lack of diligence cannot be chargeable to these children, and it is unnecessary for them to tender an excuse for not appearing on the date of the probate of the will. Appellant does not state in his petition that the proceedings complained of were fraudulent. But the admission to probate of a will, which had, in fact, been mutilated or otherwise revoked, would have been a gross violation of the rights of the grandchildren. And for these reasons the petition stated a cause of action, and, had the evidence sustained such allegations of fact, the probate of the will should have been set aside and the children permitted to file objections.

The evidence presented by the appellant shows the will written upon several sheets of ordinary ruled paper. The

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fourth sheet is shorter than the others, four lines at the bottom having been cut off after the same had been written. There is also a heavy ink line intersecting the lower portion of the letters forming the given name of the deceased and the first two letters of his surname. Upon these facts the appellant asks the court to find that said instrument was mutilated by the deceased, and that the ink line was drawn through his name for the purpose of canceling his signature and revoking said will. The evidence introduced by the appellees, however, shows to our satisfaction that the ink mark was placed upon said paper, prior to the signature of the deceased, as a guide line for him to follow in affixing his signature thereto. We are favored with the original will, which is presented in the bill of exceptions, and, also, by the original signature of the deceased to several checks, in which the same peculiarities exist. Appellees also present the testimony of the amanuensis, who testified that the fourth sheet of this will, when signed, was in the same condition as it now appears; that in preparing it he had written a provision which was objected to by the deceased, and to remedy the same, he had cut off the objectionable portion; and that the line intersecting the signature was drawn before the execution thereof as a guide line. The evidence fails to establish undue influence exercised by the children and beneficiaries of the deceased. To entitle the appellant to the relief sought, it is necessary to prove the facts alleged by a preponderance of the evidence. We do not mean to say that he must prove, by a preponderance of the evidence, facts sufficient to defeat the will upon contest, but the foundation of the action is the alleged irregularity in the probate proceeding. The burden of proof rested upon the appellant to show that the county court was without jurisdiction to admit the will to probate, or that some wrong was committed in the proceeding, which amounts to a fraud, prejudicial to the rights of his wards. Such alleged wrongs were prejudicial only in the event that the children had reasons for contesting their grandfather's will.

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Appellant contends that he is required to make, in order to obtain a new trial, only a *prima facie* case, showing that reasons for a contest existed, and cites in support thereof *Ritchey v. Sceley*, 73 Neb. 164. The decision therein was upon matters occurring after judgment, and the rule there followed is not applicable to cases such as this. Counsel also cites *Western Assurance Co. v. Klein*, 48 Neb. 904, wherein it appears that the real ground for a new trial was the existence of some of the reasons specified in section 602 of the code. But before the applicant could avail himself thereof he should produce evidence to show at least a *prima facie* valid defense or cause of action. Substantially to the same effect it has been held that not only must the parties seeking to open a judgment show that irregularities occurred, but it is necessary to allege and prove a valid cause of action or defense, and to secure an adjudication that the cause of action or defense is *prima facie* valid. *Gilbert v. Marrow*, 54 Neb. 77; *Clark v. Charles*, 55 Neb. 202; *Delaney v. Updike Grain Co.*, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 579. In this case the alleged irregularities are not admitted by the appellees, and must therefore be proved, the same as any other allegation of fact, and, in addition thereto, the appellant must show some valid cause for the contest of the will and convince the court that the cause of contest is *prima facie* valid, or that sufficient grounds existed to refuse the probate of the will. The notice of the petition for probate was published under the direction of the county court, and no evidence is produced to show that such order was procured by the fraud of the interested parties. It was shown, however, that said paper did not circulate in the vicinity where the children resided; but such evidence was insufficient to impeach the notice thus published.

The guardian *ad litem* was appointed subsequently to the first publication of said notice and prior to the last, and this, appellant argues, was an irregularity sufficient to defeat the probate of the will. None of the interested parties have the right to name or dictate to the court the

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appointment of a guardian *ad litem*. A mere suggestion, however, is not improper, and, unless evidence is produced showing the perpetration of some fraud or wrong by the guardian *ad litem*, the judgment of the court will not be set aside for a mere irregularity as to the time of his appointment. We agree with counsel that the duties of the guardian *ad litem* require the same energy and exertion in behalf of his wards, and demand the same skill and integrity, as though he had been acting under an express retainer from a client; but such duties do not require him on the hearing to insist upon issues which have no foundation in law nor in fact; and by a careful examination of the evidence we fail to find where any duty has been neglected by the guardian *ad litem* in this case. The appellant's attorney, who ably presented this cause to the trial court, failed to produce evidence regarding the execution of the will, or the circumstances surrounding the making thereof, other than was presented to the county court upon the hearing of the petition for probate.

Appellant contends that, inasmuch as this guardian *ad litem* had filed the general denial and demanded proof of the due execution of the will, the court could not legally admit the will to probate upon the evidence of but one subscribing witness. The appointment and appearance of a guardian *ad litem* was not a condition precedent to the admitting of the will to probate, and it does not appear in the proof that the failure to call other attesting witnesses was prejudiced to the children.

The evidence produced upon the trial, in our opinion, did not support the allegations of the petition, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For reasons set forth in the above opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

**JOHN A. NELSON, APPELLANT, V. ISAAC SNEED, APPELLEE.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,224.

**Highway: Prescription.** "To establish a highway by prescription there must be a user by the general public under a claim of right, and which is adverse to the occupancy of the owner of the land, of some particular or defined way or track, uninterruptedly, without substantial change, for a period of time necessary to bar an action to recover the land." *Engle v. Hunt*, 50 Neb. 358; *Bleck v. Keller*, 73 Neb. 826.

APPEAL from the district court for Otoe county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

*W. F. Moran*, for appellant.

*John C. Watson*, *contra*.

**EPPERSON, C.**

The plaintiff owns lot 12, in block 116, in Greengsport addition to Nebraska City. This lot is 120 feet north and south, and 48 feet east and west. Plaintiff brought this action in the district court for Otoe county to enjoin the defendant from trespassing upon this lot and lot 11 abutting it on the west, and from destroying plaintiff's fences and gates erected thereon. There was a judgment in the court below for defendant, and the plaintiff brings the case here on appeal.

Running north and south on the east side of lot 12 there was platted and dedicated to the public, several years ago, a highway, known as "Second Street," and abutting the lot on the south was a highway, running east and west, known as "Sixth Avenue." Three years prior to the filing of this suit plaintiff constructed, near the southeast corner of the lot, a gate in a line of fence running east and west. The evidence conclusively shows that the fence and gate are south of the south line of plaintiff's property, and clearly within Sixth avenue. The defendant claims that

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for 14 years he and the public generally have traveled upon the road as it is now used by him, and which was obstructed by the aforesaid gate, and that the public had by ten years' user acquired a prescriptive right thereto. Prior to the institution of this suit plaintiff locked his gate and forbade the defendant going upon the premises. Defendant, believing the road he was accustomed to travel was a public highway, forcibly opened the gate and continued to use the road until enjoined.

The only question presented is whether the public has acquired a prescriptive right to the use as a highway of the strip of land upon which the defendant was accustomed to travel, by user thereof for a period of time sufficient to bar an action to recover possession thereof. The fact that the gate was situated upon property not belonging to the plaintiff, and the fact of its destruction by the defendant, we consider of no particular importance. Irregularity in the habits of the Missouri river is responsible for this trouble. When Greengsport addition to Nebraska City was platted about 40 years ago, the premises in controversy were at a distance of about 250 feet west from the west bank of the Missouri river. From time to time this wily stream encroached upon its bank until in the spring of 1898 it reached and submerged the greater portion of Second street, which abutted the plaintiff's lot. The evidence is undisputed that during all this time there has been used for travel, by those having occasion to pass plaintiff's property, a road along the west bank of the river, which would change as the river changed. This use was not by the public generally, and it seems it was limited to the defendant and one of his neighbors, and to others occupied in hauling ice or wood in certain seasons. There was no evidence that the road was ever worked by the city authorities, nor that Second street was ever used for travel until it became the west bank of the river. The road had no definite location, and there were no fences or other monuments indicating the lines of the alleged highway. The defendant testified that for fourteen years he had used the

driveway where it is now located. Many of his witnesses, however, and many of plaintiff's witnesses testified, and we think the proof clearly shows, that the road as now used through plaintiff's property was not used until 1898, when the travel was driven to the present location of the road on account of a sudden change of about 35 feet by the river to the west. Even had the defendant used a part of plaintiff's lot for 14 years, he failed to establish that such use was adverse to the occupancy of the plaintiff or his grantors, and that it was limited to a particular or defined way or track, without substantial change. It is a well established rule in this state that "to establish a highway by prescription there must be a user by the general public under a claim of right, and which is adverse to the occupancy of the owner of the land, of some particular or defined way or track, uninterruptedly, without substantial change, for a period of time necessary to bar an action to recover the land." *Engle v. Hunt*, 50 Neb. 358; *Bleck v. Keller*, 73 Neb. 826.

There is some doubt as to how much of the road is upon the plaintiff's property. That it runs through the north part of the lot is not questioned. There is a conflict in the evidence of civil engineers as to the south part. This difference arises on account of an uncertainty as to the location of the line between lot 12 and Second street. It is peculiar that there should be a difference in the plats made by competent surveyors, but such is the case. One plat shows the east line of lot 12, 25 feet from the river, leaving a portion of the road in controversy east of lot 12. This plat was made by one who was not called to testify, but was verified by the testimony of a competent civil engineer who had measured the distances, but who fails to show that his survey was based upon any established monument. We accept as conclusive on this point the plat verified by the county surveyor which, though not very satisfactory, shows a survey made by the witness who took for his starting points the line of Second street north and south of the property in controversy. His survey shows that the high

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land, or west bank of the river, begins at a point only four feet east of the southeast corner of plaintiff's lot, and continues in a northerly direction, bearing slightly to the west, extending west of the northeast corner of said lot, a distance of about 20 feet, the west bank of the river intersecting the east line of the lot at a point about midway. Substantially all of Second street east of lot 12 is submerged; and as the objectionable road is along the bank of the river, it necessarily traverses the plaintiff's property from north to south. From the proof we conclude that the use by the plaintiff and the public of the land in controversy had not been of such a character as to establish a prescriptive right thereto, and the prayer of the petition ought to have been granted.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed, with directions to the court below to enter a decree granting the perpetual injunction asked by plaintiff.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For reasons appearing in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the district court directed to enter a decree granting the perpetual injunction prayed for by plaintiff.

REVERSED.

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**WILLIAM J. STAATS ET AL., APPELLANTS, v. STANLEY B.  
WILSON, APPELLEE.\***

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,237.

1. Partition: JUDGMENT: RES JUDICATA. The judgment of the court, unappealed from, in a suit for partition of real estate, fixing the shares of the interested parties and making partition of the land, is final, and the parties thereto are estopped from claiming a greater interest, even though the proceedings of the court were

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\*Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 210, *post*.

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irregular and the shares of the parties determined according to the provisions of an unconstitutional act of the legislature.

2. **Estoppel.** A widow who succeeded to a homestead valued at \$2,000, for the purpose of procuring the absolute title thereto, paid the heirs \$666.66, which they accepted, believing that such payment vested the absolute title in the widow; the heirs retained the payments so made, and remained silent for more than ten years. *Held*, That the heirs are estopped from now asserting title to the homestead against the widow's grantee, who purchased in good faith.

**APPEAL** from the district court for Richardson county:  
**WILLIAM H. KELLIGAR, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*John H. Barry and Edwin Falloon*, for appellants.

*C. Gillespie and John Gagnon*, contra.

**EPPERSON, C.**

Christopher Hoagland died intestate in Richardson county in 1891, seized in fee simple of the northwest quarter of section 26, township 3, range 13, in said county. He left surviving him his widow and six sons and daughters, and the children of a deceased son. While the administration of his estate was pending, his widow filed her application in the county court of Richardson county for the appraisement of the homestead, as provided by section 30 of the Compiled Statutes of 1889. Appraisers were appointed by the court and filed their written appraisement of the southwest 40 acres of said land, which they valued at \$2,000. On March 16, 1892, the widow filed her written acceptance of the appraisement, and paid to the administrator the sum of \$1,000, being the excess of the appraised value over and above \$1,000, which she evidently considered she was entitled to as her homestead interest. The administrator distributed to the heirs the \$1,000 surplus paid by the widow, except one-third thereof, which the widow of said deceased claimed or deducted at the time of payment. On the 23d day of April, 1892, John C. Hoagland, one of the heirs at law of said deceased, instituted an action in the district court for Richardson county for the

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partition of the entire quarter section of land. In this action all the necessary parties were joined, and personal service of summons was had upon Mary Staats and Sarah Staats, two of the children and heirs of said deceased.

To this petition the widow filed her separate answer, alleging the facts above set forth as to the appraisement of the southwest quarter of said 160 acres, and the payment by her to the administrator of the \$1,000, and of her election to retain the homestead so appraised, claiming that it descended to her in absolute title, and that the court had no jurisdiction in that action over the said 40 acre tract. She further claims that, as widow of the deceased, she owned an undivided one-third of the balance of said land, and prayed for a judgment confirming her share, and asked that the same be set off to her. To this answer the plaintiff replied by general denial. Mary Staats and Sarah Staats made no appearance in said proceeding. Upon trial of that cause the court found that the southwest quarter of said quarter section of land was the homestead of the widow, and, as to the balance of said land, that the widow is the owner and entitled to the undivided one-third part, and that the children of said deceased were each the owner of a one-seventh part, and by his judgment confirmed the interest of the parties, respectively, and appointed referees to make partition into the requisite number of shares. Later the referees made their report, showing that they had made partial partition by allowing to the widow the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of section 26, which was of no greater value than one-third the total value of the entire premises to be partitioned, and reported that the balance of said land cannot be partitioned without great prejudice to the owners thereof. The court confirmed this report and ordered the referees to sell the balance of said land as provided by law. This order was complied with, and the remaining 80 acres sold for the sum of \$3,448, which sale was reported to and confirmed by the court November 30, 1892. The referees were di-

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rected to make their deed to the purchaser and distribute the proceeds of the sale to the parties according to their respective shares. On the first day of March, 1894, the widow, by her warranty deed, conveyed to the defendant all of the land so claimed by her. It is apparent that the widow, the administrator, the heirs and the courts attempted to follow the provisions of the Baker act of 1889, which was by this court declared unconstitutional in the case of *Trumble v. Trumble*, 37 Neb. 340. The widow died in 1901.

On the 26th day of March, 1903, plaintiffs herein instituted this action in the district court for Richardson county for a partition of the said south half of said quarter section of land, so conveyed to the defendant by the widow, claiming each to own a one-seventh part thereof. They admit that the defendant owns the other five-sevenths, the other heirs having conveyed to him whatever interest they possessed. The plaintiff Sarah Staats claimed as heir and George F. Staats as the grantee of Mary Staats. The plaintiffs contend that the proceedings in the probate court and the early partition case were void and of no effect, because they were conducted under the provisions of the Baker act, which in the light of subsequent adjudication is known to be unconstitutional, and that they are entitled now to a division of the property, the same as though the former proceedings in partition and the attempted assignment of the homestead had never been had.

The defendant contends, among other things, that the rights of the widow, to which he succeeded, were adjudicated by a competent court, that the plaintiffs were estopped from claiming title to the land in controversy. The judgment of the lower court was for defendant, and plaintiffs appeal.

The rights of the parties hereto depend upon their conduct and the proceedings had, which differ as to the two tracts of land, the southwest quarter known as the homestead, and the southeast quarter assigned in the partition

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case. The title of the widow to the southeast quarter, if any she had in addition to dower, was acquired by the assignment of the same to her in the partition case. In that case the court had jurisdiction over all of the interested parties. They, and none other, owned the property and were entitled to a partition thereof. The widow had a dower interest in and to the 120 acres of land. This should have been assigned to her. She claimed a greater interest, and asked the court to give her one-third absolutely; the plaintiffs herein, or those to whose title they succeeded, did not oppose the application of the widow. The court, being fully vested with jurisdiction, granted her petition, and set off to her in actual partition the 40 acres, being one-third of the land involved. The court found that she was legally entitled to the land assigned to her. The court therefore erred, and, had proceedings in error been prosecuted, the judgment would have been reversed. The court's jurisdiction did not depend on the unconstitutional Baker act. The judgment was not void, but erroneous. *Brandhoefer v. Bain*, 45 Neb. 781. It is not subject to collateral attack. By the judgment in that partition case the title confirmed in each of the parties thereto became *res judicata*. In other words, had the Baker act never existed, and had the court proceeded as it did, its proceedings would have been irregular and subject to reversal in a direct proceeding. In the absence of proceedings to review, its judgment would have stood as final, so far as it affected the parties thereto or their grantees. The fact that the legislature had passed a void act does not render the judgment less effective than it would have been had no such act been passed.

Plaintiffs contend that a judgment in partition proceedings is not final. Section 811 of the code, relating to actions in partition, provides—"After all the shares and interests of the parties have been settled \* \* \* judgment shall be rendered confirming those shares and interests, and directing partition to be made accordingly." Section 839 provides: "When all the parties in interest

have been duly served, any of the proceedings herein prescribed shall be binding and conclusive upon them all." Section 840 provides: "The judgment of partition shall be presumptive evidence of title in all cases, and as between the parties themselves it is conclusive evidence thereof, subject, however, to be defeated by proof of a title paramount to, or independent of, that under which the parties held as joint tenants or tenants in common." This language is so plain that no judicial interpretation is required.

As to the homestead forty, a different and more difficult question is presented. The proceedings for partition in which the homestead was mentioned did not finally dispose of same to the extent of adjudicating the rights of the plaintiffs herein. The records of the county court do not show an assignment to the widow, but show that the land of the deceased descended to the heirs, subject to the homestead of the widow. The defendant's grantor claimed the homestead as the widow of the deceased, and by reason of the payment of the \$666.66 distributed to the heirs in payment for that part thereof which she thought she was not entitled to as widow. Her attempt to procure an assignment of the homestead and the payment of the \$666.66 was prior to the early partition suit, which, as heretofore shown, disposed of the balance of the estate. That the deceased had a homestead interest in his land to which his widow succeeded there is no doubt. At the time she elected to take the 40 acre tract as her homestead and paid the surplus to the administrator, and upon payment of a share thereof to the said Mary Staats and Sarah Staats, each of them executed a voucher in which payment thereof was acknowledged as "the portion due me of the sum paid by Ella M. Hoagland, widow of said Christopher M. Hoagland, by reason of her election to retain homestead under and by virtue of section 30, chapter 23 of the Compiled Statutes of 1887, as amended by act of 1889, §95.23." Had the Baker act been constitutional, it would have vested title in the widow. The receipt of this fund by these heirs is not

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denied, neither is it denied that they received their distributive share of the proceeds of the purchase price paid for the north half of the quarter section.

The conduct of the widow and the heirs regarding the homestead amounted to a partial parol partition of the land with owelty. Each was competent to contract and had an interest which she had a legal right to dispose of. The heirs accepted money advanced by the widow which otherwise they would not have received, and parted with title which otherwise they would have retained. Their conduct vested an equitable title to the homestead in the widow which, in our opinion, she could have confirmed by a proper proceeding in her lifetime. Parol partitions are unsatisfactory and should be discouraged, but, when indulged by one who retains the benefits thereof, and who acquiesces therein for a considerable time, operate as an estoppel. Freeman, Cotenancy and Partition (2d ed.), sec. 398; *Whittemore v. Cope*, 11 Utah, 344. The heirs knew that their mother, the widow, claimed absolute title. They received a just compensation for their interests. They stood by and saw the plaintiff take possession, and probably knew the terms of his purchase. The conscience of this court knows no rule that will permit them to recover.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed October 8, 1906. *Judgment of affirmance adhered to:*

EPPERSON, C.

The facts in this case are stated in the former opinion reported *ante*, p. 204. A rehearing was granted, additional briefs filed and the case again argued orally.

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1. Plaintiffs contend that in the partition case instituted by John C. Hoagland the court did not have the jurisdiction to set off to the widow the S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the N. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the Hoagland land. It is admitted that the court had jurisdiction of the parties and the subject matter; but it is argued that the court had no jurisdiction to assign to the widow the 40 acres or one-third in value of all the land partitioned, when by law the widow was only entitled to a dower interest in the land. Such decree, it is argued, is null and void and may be attacked collaterally. Counsel cite *Cizek v. Cizek*, 69 Neb. 800, in support of their contention. It was there held:

"In a suit arising under the provisions of chapter 25, Comp. St. 1901, the district court has not jurisdiction to award real estate of the husband to the wife in fee as alimony, and a decree in so far as it attempts so to do is void and subject to collateral attack."

The *Cizek* case is not analogous to the case at bar. The statute giving the district court the power to grant alimony does not provide that real estate belonging to the husband may be set off to the wife as alimony or in lieu of alimony, and the question considered in *Cizek v. Cizek, supra*, was: "Is the power to give the husband's real estate to the wife by decree in a divorce suit implied in the power which the statute expressly confers to give alimony?" The order awarding specific real estate to the wife as alimony was held void and subject to collateral attack. It was a special matter not presented by the pleadings and foreign to the issues. In the Hoagland partition case, which is assailed in the case at bar, the only issue presented was the widow's right to have the 40 acres in controversy set off to her as her interest in her late husband's estate. The court had jurisdiction, under the statutes quoted in our former opinion, to ascertain and confirm the shares of the parties. Can it be said that by erroneously decreeing to her more than she was entitled to the court exceeded its jurisdiction? By the order confirming in the widow the 40 acre tract as her share, the court kept

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within the issues raised by the pleadings and within the statute giving it power to order partition.

2. As to the homestead forty we see no error in our former opinion. The heirs received \$666.66 for their interest in land worth \$2,000. Their interest was subject to the widow's life estate. It is not shown that the amount received was inadequate. In *Wamsley v. Crook*, 3 Neb. 344, 352, it is said:

"It is a well settled rule of law that one cannot be permitted to receive both the purchase money and the land. And the application of this principle of estoppel 'does not depend upon any supposed distinction between a void and voidable sale. The receipt of the money, with the knowledge that the purchaser is paying it upon an understanding that he is purchasing a good title, touches the conscience and therefore binds the rights of the party in one case as well as in the other.'"

This case was cited with approval in *McMurtry v. Brown*, 6 Neb. 368; *Yanow v. Snelling*, 34 Neb. 280. Plaintiffs received their share of the \$666.66 from the widow, who thought she was buying their interest. They thought they were selling, and they were. They never returned the purchase price. It is evident that the decree of the district court was right. Our former opinion affirming that decree should be adhered to, and we so recommend.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the former judgment in this case is adhered to.

AFFIRMED.

**OLIVE N. JUDKINS, APPELLEE, v. WILLIAM H. JUDKINS,  
APPELLANT.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,208.

Evidence examined, and held to support the decree entered.

APPEAL from the district court for Custer county:  
**BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*H. M. Sullivan*, for appellant.

*J. R. Dean and Aaron Wall, contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

The plaintiff filed her bill against the defendant and appellant claiming a divorce on the ground of cruelty. The defendant's answer is in the nature of a cross-petition, asking that he be divorced from the plaintiff. The court made the following finding: "The court finds that the conduct of each of the parties toward the other has been such that they are not entitled to relief by a court of equity. That neither of said parties has fulfilled the duties which rest upon them under and by virtue of their marriage relation, and that because of the ill treatment of each toward the other neither is entitled to the relief for which they here pray." A decree was entered dismissing both the plaintiff's bill and the defendant's cross-bill.

A careful reading of the evidence contained in a voluminous record leads us to believe that the decree was the only one which could be entered in the case. We are not entirely satisfied with the finding that the husband's conduct toward his wife is deserving of censure. It is evident that he was frugal and saving, and not as liberal in expenditures on account of his wife and family as his circumstances might justify. However, he provided her with such help as was necessary when it could be obtained, and lent his own assistance in the performance of her house-

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hold duties. The wife appears to be what one of the witnesses denominates "a chronic complainer." She was dissatisfied with her surroundings, with the defendant's conduct and refusal to be more liberal in his expenditures of money, and evidently would not be satisfied with the most kind and liberal treatment. While this was the case, and while, so far as we can see, there was no occasion or excuse for her separating from her husband, she was not guilty of any act which under our statute entitled him to a divorce. While she had left his home without just cause, as we view the evidence, the desertion had not continued for two years when the cross-bill was filed. The case is an unfortunate one, but the evidence does not disclose sufficient facts upon which to grant relief to either party.

We recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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BEAUFORD H. BUSH, APPELLANT, v. SPENCER G. GRIFFIN,  
ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,141.

1. **Adverse Possession: Evidence.** While the fact that one claiming title by adverse possession failed to pay taxes on the land during his occupancy would not of itself necessarily defeat his claim, it is entitled to weight as tending to show that he did not intend to claim title as against the rightful owner.
2. \_\_\_\_\_. Where such occupant entered originally without color of title or claim of right, and the acts relied on to show entry and occupation were consistent with a mere intention to trespass from time to time until interfered with by the true owner, his testimony that he intended to take possession and hold and occupy as owner, uncorroborated by acts necessarily indicating such intention, is not sufficient to require a finding in his favor. *Knight v. Denman*, 64 Neb. 814.

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3. Evidence examined, and held to bring the case within the foregoing rule.

APPEAL from the district court for Hayes county: HANSON M. GRIMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*C. A. Ready, F. I. Foss and R. D. Brown*, for appellant.

*W. S. Morlan, contra.*

ALBERT, C.

This suit was brought in March, 1903, to quiet the title to a quarter section of land in Hayes county, the plaintiff claiming title by adverse possession, the defendants tracing their title to a patent from the government. It appears in the evidence that the plaintiff settled near this land in 1886. At that time the land in question, as well as most of the land in that vicinity, was wild, a part of the public domain and open to settlement. Between that time and 1890 the plaintiff built and extended his fences so as to include a portion of the quarter section in dispute and other lands to which he had no title with his own. In 1889 one Marshall preempted this quarter section, and the following year proved up, made a loan on the land and left the country. The plaintiff afterwards, in the same year, extended his fences so as to include the entire tract, and has ever since been in possession using it in connection with other lands for grazing purposes. The plaintiff continued to extend the boundaries of his ranch, paying little or no attention to titles, so that at present it consists of almost 3,000 acres, of which the plaintiff can show paper title to less than 700 acres. The remainder belongs mostly to non-residents; a portion of it, however, is still government land. The loan made to Marshall was foreclosed and the land sold in pursuance of the decree, and the sheriff's deed based on such sale, and under which the defendants claim title, was executed on the 14th day of November, 1892. The plaintiff was not a party to the foreclosure suit.

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With the exception of one year, 1902, the plaintiff paid no taxes on the land. He took possession under no claim of right. As we have seen, he was in possession of a portion of the land when Marshall preempted it. The record shows that he recognized Marshall's right to preempt the land, as well as Marshall's title acquired by virtue of the preemption. At the time he extended his fence so as to take in the whole tract, which was after Marshall had left, he made no claim to the land. His examination at this point is, in part, as follows: "Q. After Marshall (the man who preempted the land) proved up and went away you put the whole fence around the quarter, did you? A. I moved the fence out of the canon, and moved it on the line (taking in the whole tract). Q. And took it inside of your ranch. Just before Marshall went away did you say anything to him about fencing this land in? A. No, I never asked him anything about fencing it. Q. Never asked him anything about it? A. Never did. Q. When you fenced it in what title did you claim at that time? A. I didn't claim any title. Just fenced it in. Q. When you fenced it in you didn't claim any title? A. No, sir. Q. When was it you did claim title to it? A. I have been claiming it as my pasture ever since I fenced it. Q. You didn't claim any title to it when you fenced it? A. Not before I fenced it, but after I *fenced* it I did. Q. By what right did you claim it at that time? A. Well, adverse. Q. What right did you claim to have to it? A. I didn't claim I had any right at all, only I just fenced it. Q. The facts are Marshall went away, and there was nobody living there, and you thought you would fence it in? A. That is it. Q. And you kept it fenced ever since? A. Yes, sir. Q. You never paid anybody anything for it? A. I never paid anything only some taxes."

From the evidence just quoted, taken in connection with the facts hereinbefore stated, it seems clear to us that the purpose of the plaintiff in taking possession of the land was not to hold it as against the rightful owner, but merely

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to use it, as he was using other lands in which he had no claim or color of title, as long as he could without interference from the owner. We have seen that he inclosed and used government land in the same way. He certainly asserted no claim or title to such lands, but stood ready to surrender possession to any one claiming under the government, just as he surrendered that portion of the land in question which he had previously inclosed to Marshall, when the latter preempted it in 1889.

Another thing that inclines us to this view is that for more than ten years after taking possesision of the land he paid no taxes. While that fact of itself would not defeat his claim of title by adverse possession, still it is of weight as tending to show that he did not intend to claim title as against the rightful owner. As was said in *Todd v. Weed*, 84 Minn. 4:

"The land, being a government subdivision, was presumably taxed separately from other lands, but defendant never paid the same. On the contrary, they were annually paid by plaintiff or his predecessor in title. The failure to pay taxes is, of course, not conclusive against the person claiming title by adverse possession. But such failure, where the land is assessed separately, is strong and forcible evidence that the possessor did not intend to claim title adversely to the owner. \* \* \* If the payment of taxes tends to show an intention to claim title—and clearly it does—the failure to pay them would *a fortiori* tend to show the converse of the proposition."

It appearing, then, that the plaintiff took and retained possession without any claim of right or color of title, and with no intention of holding it as against the owner, but merely to use it for his own purposes as long as he could, the case falls within the rule announced in *Knight v. Dementan*, 64 Neb. 814:

"Where such occupant entered originally without color of title or claim of right, and the acts relied on to show entry and occupation were consistent with a mere intention to trespass from time to time until interfered with by

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the true owner, his testimony that he intended to take possession and hold and occupy as owner, uncorroborated by acts necessarily indicating such intentions, is not sufficient to require a finding in his favor."

The opinion from which the foregoing is taken is by Commissioner POUND, and contains not only an exhaustive review of the authorities on the question under consideration, but clear and cogent reasoning in support of the rule stated. The plaintiff, however, insists that the facts in that case are, in many respects, different from those in the case at bar. They are; and it may be said that two cases seldom involve precisely the same state of facts. But that does not destroy the value of the former as a precedent as long as they have enough facts in common to furnish the essential elements of some rule announced in the one and invoked in the other. The facts in this case cover every essential element of that rule and bring the case, it seems to us, squarely within it. The decree seems to be fully justified by the record, and it is recommended that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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BEAUFORD H. BUSH, APPELLANT, v. HENRY BROWN ET AL.,  
APPELLEES.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,142.

**Case Followed.** This is a companion case to *Bush v. Griffin*, ante, p. 214, decided at this sitting, and is governed by the same rules.

APPEAL from the district court for Hayes county: HANSON M. GRIMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

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Gering v. School District.

*C. A. Ready, F. I. Foss and R. D. Brown*, for appellant.

*W. S. Morlan, contra.*

ALBERT, C.

This is a companion case to *Bush v. Griffin*, ante, p. 214, and was submitted at the same time on the same briefs. While a judgment of affirmance in this particular case might be placed on other grounds, it is also governed by the rule applied in that case, hence, a discussion of other features is not required.

It is recommended that the decree be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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#### MATTHEW GERING V. SCHOOL DISTRICT.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,170.

1. **Compromise: Consideration.** A compromise, whereby one party agrees to pay and the other to receive a certain sum in satisfaction of a doubtful claim, rests upon a sufficient consideration.
2. \_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_. But if the claimant, knowing that his claim is groundless, forces the other party to a compromise by threats of suit, there is no consideration and the compromise will not be enforced.
3. \_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_. Forbearance to prosecute proceedings for the reversal of a judgment is a sufficient consideration for a compromise, and, unless the good faith of the claimant in pressing his claim is put in issue, whether he intended to prosecute such proceedings is immaterial.
4. **Judgment: Res Judicata.** One of the essentials of a judgment offered in support of a technical plea in bar is that it was rendered in a suit involving the same subject matter as that in which the plea is interposed, and, lacking that element, it is not available in support of such plea.

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5. ———: ———: Where the second action is on a different claim or demand, the judgment in the former operates as an estoppel only as to those matters in issue upon the determination of which the judgment was rendered.
6. ———: ———: **BURDEN OF PROOF.** In such cases the rule is that, if there be any uncertainty in the record as to the issues actually tried or adjudicated in the former suit, the whole subject matter of the action will be at large, unless the uncertainty be removed by extrinsic evidence, and the burden of proof is upon the party relying upon the estoppel to show that a question raised in the present suit was litigated and determined in that in which the judgment was rendered.
7. **Action: COMPROMISE; INTIMIDATION: EVIDENCE.** In an action upon the promise of a school district to pay a certain amount in composition of a doubtful claim, one of the defenses was that the claimant secured the adoption of a resolution for the compromise by threats and intimidation, and there is evidence tending to support such defense. *Held*, That evidence as to his reputation in the vicinity, as to being peaceable or otherwise, was properly received.
8. Declarations of parties made at a meeting where such resolution was adopted, tending to show that they were intimidated and for that reason left the meeting and refrained from voting on the resolution, are properly receivable in evidence as a part of the *res gestae*.

**ERROR to the district court for Cass county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Reversed.***

*A. N. Sullivan and Jesse L. Root, for plaintiff in error.*

*Byron Clark, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

From July, 1894, to July, 1897, C. Lawrence Stull was treasurer of defendant school district. At the close of his term he attempted to retain certain funds of the district to pay himself for labor performed for the district and interest paid on its registered warrants. Stull and his surety were sued for funds thus retained. A counterclaim and set-off for the amount of Stull's claim was interposed. In the district court Stull confessed

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and paid judgment for the amount of the defendant's claim. The costs accrued to that time amounted to \$32.79. Immediately thereafter the suit proceeded on Stull's claim against the district, terminating in a verdict for defendant. The costs incurred in that contest amounted to \$158.84. June 1, 1899, a motion for a new trial was overruled and judgment rendered on said verdict. The annual meeting of the electors of defendant district in 1899 was held June 26. There was presented to and adopted by said electors a resolution reciting the litigation between defendant and Stull and instructing the school board of defendant to settle with said Stull by paying him the sum of \$61.25 and all the costs in said suit. Mr. Stull thereupon forbore to prosecute error proceeding to this court, and thereafter the moderator and director of the district executed a warrant for the sum of \$252.88, including therein, not only the \$61.25 due Stull, and the costs of the action, \$158.84, which Stull had not paid, but the \$32.79 adjudged against Stull at the time he confessed judgment in favor of the district. The treasurer refused to pay or register this warrant. Stull sought to compel by mandamus the registration of said warrant. The court refused the writ, because the warrant was for a greater sum than the district was liable for under its settlement, and because Stull had not paid the \$158.84. Thereafter, to prevent sale of his property on execution, Stull paid the costs, \$158.84, the district was to pay, and the \$32.79 he was liable for. A second mandamus suit was disposed of, because the district had not authorized a warrant in the sum of \$252.88. Stull thereafter became indebted to plaintiff, and sold and assigned to him his claim against defendant. In the county court Judge Douglass rendered judgment in favor of Mr. Gering. In the district court one jury disagreed, but at the November, 1904, term of said court a verdict was rendered in favor of the school district. The petition embraces the facts just stated, and prays judgment against the defendant school district.

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Among other matters set up in the answer are the following: "Defendant further denies that at the time the alleged resolution was pretended to have been passed there was any school district meeting or election of said district in session; but in this alleges that said school district meeting, by reason of the threats and intimidations of said Stull, was adjourned, and a majority of the electors had returned to their homes through fear; \* \* \* and that, if any such resolution was passed, it was passed after said meeting had adjourned and said electors were driven away by the actions of the said Stull and others with him, and that said resolution was never adopted or passed by said district, or a majority of the lawful electors thereof, either at said meeting or at any other time." The defendant also pleads an estoppel based on the two judgments in the proceedings in mandamus. The cause was tried to a jury, who returned a verdict for the defendant. The plaintiff prosecutes error.

From the foregoing statement it will be seen that the consideration relied on by the plaintiff to support the alleged settlement between Stull and the school district was the abandonment of his right to prosecute error to this court from the judgment dismissing his action against the district, and for costs, rendered in the district court for Cass county on the 1st day of June, 1899. The court instructed the jury that there were five issues of fact involved in the case, and which they were called upon to determine, and that the burden of proof was upon the plaintiff to establish each of such issues by a preponderance of the evidence. One of such issues was thus stated by the court in its instructions to the jury:

"Was C. Lawrence Stull, on or about the 26th day of June, 1899, intending and preparing to have reviewed in the supreme court of Nebraska, in the ordinary manner, a judgment rendered against him in the district court for Cass county, Nebraska, June 1, 1899, in which case the said Stull was plaintiff and school district 28 in Cass

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county, Nebraska, was defendant?" It seems clear to us that the trial court erred in submitting the foregoing question to the jury. It is well settled, in fact is elementary, that the compromise of doubtful claims is valid, the mutual release of their respective rights by the parties and the avoidance of the expense and annoyance of litigation being a sufficient consideration for the composition. But it is also elementary, that to render such compromise valid the parties must concur in supposing the right to be doubtful, for if the claimant, knowing his demand to be groundless, forces the other party to a settlement by threats of suit the compromise will not be upheld. *Fitzgerald v. Fitzgerald & Mallory C. Co.*, 44 Neb. 463; *Prater v. Miller*, 25 Ala. 320, 60 Am. Dec. 521; *Schnell v. Nell*, 17 Ind. 29, 79 Am. Dec. 453; *Tucker v. Ronk*, 43 Ia. 80. If Stull's *bona fides* in asserting his claim against the school district had been put in issue, we can readily see, in the light of the foregoing rule, how his intentions with respect to prosecuting an appeal would be material. But no such theory was submitted to the jury; that is to say, no instructions were given covering the theory that his claim was groundless, and that he, knowing it was groundless, forced a compromise by threats of further litigation. In fact, in more than one instruction the court recognized Stull's forbearance to prosecute error as a sufficient consideration to support the compromise contemplated by the resolution adopted at the school meeting. But in each of such instructions the jury were told in effect, that the validity of the compromise would depend on whether at the time, Stull intended and was preparing to prosecute error from the judgment. We are unable to see how his intentions or his preparations to prosecute error could be material in such circumstances. At the time the compromise was made Stull had a right to institute proceedings for a reversal of the judgment. It is elementary that if a person has a right at law his forbearance to institute legal proceedings to enforce or protect it is a valid consideration and sufficient to support a composition. The right

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to have a judgment against him reviewed in an appellate court was a legal right, and forbearance to institute proceedings for that purpose was a valuable consideration. *Read v. French*, 28 N. Y. 285; *Russell v. Daniels*, 5 Colo. App. 224; *Matthews v. Merrick*, 4 Md. Ch. 364. The consideration for the compromise was the forbearance of his right to prosecute error, and not the abandonment of an intention to do so. A party may in good faith assert a claim against another for damages for breach of contract. If both concur in the belief that it is a doubtful claim, it will support a compromise, although the party asserting the claim may have had no intention of resorting to an action to enforce it. The value of a consideration does not always consist of its value to the party who surrenders it, but sometimes consists wholly of its value to the party to whom it moves. In this case, while Stull may have had no intention of carrying the litigation to this court, yet the defendant had a perfect right to protect itself against a change of his intentions in that regard, and assure itself beyond a peradventure that the litigation was ended. For these reasons, we think the district court erred in submitting the question of Stull's intentions with respect to instituting proceedings for the reversal of the judgment to the jury.

But the defendant contends that the plaintiff must fail in any event, for the reason that he is concluded by the judgments rendered in the two proceedings in mandamus instituted by Stull, his assignor, because, as he asserts, the issues in those cases were precisely the same as those raised in this action. The argument upon this branch of the case is somewhat confusing because of the failure to distinguish between a judgment urged as a technical bar to another action and one that is urged merely as conclusive upon the parties as to one or more of the issues involved. This distinction is made clear in *Cromwell v. Sac County*, 94 U. S. 351, quoted at some length in *Hanson v. Hanson*, 64 Neb. 506, and is recognized by all text writers. Without stopping to enumerate all the essentials

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of a judgment which will constitute a technical bar to another action between the same parties or their privies, it may be said that all writers agree that there must be an identity of subject matter; that is, the subject matter of the suit in which the judgment was rendered, must be the same as that involved in the suit in which the judgment is urged as a bar. *Hamilton Nat. Bank v. American L. & T. Co.*, 66 Neb. 67, 82, and authorities cited. But, where the second action is upon a different claim or demand, the judgment in the prior action operates as an estoppel only as to those matters in issue upon the determination of which the judgment was rendered. *Cromwell v. Sac County, supra*, and *Hanson v. Hanson, supra*.

In the present case, the plaintiff's claim is based on a contract. His two applications for a writ of mandamus were based on the alleged refusal of the respondents to perform a plain ministerial duty. It is quite clear therefore that the subject matter involved in those proceedings was different from that involved in the case at bar, and that the judgments rendered therein are not available in support of a technical plea in bar of this suit. Those judgments, then, if available to the defendant in this case for any purpose, are available only to the extent that some material issue was litigated and determined in one or both of those actions, and as to any such issue the judgment or judgments by which it was determined are conclusive upon the parties. But, from an examination of the record in the two mandamus cases, it is impossible to determine upon what grounds the applications were denied. From the pleadings it is clear that some of the issues raised are identical with some of those raised in the present action. But in addition to such issues there was involved in each application the further issue whether the respondents were in default of an official duty which the court would enforce by mandamus. From the nature of the pleadings the applications might have been denied for reasons in nowise affecting the merits of the present cause; for example, on the grounds alleged in the petition

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filed in this case. The rule is that, if there be any uncertainty in the record, as, for example, if it appear that several distinct matters may have been litigated, upon one or more of which judgment was rendered, the whole subject matter of the action will be at large and open to a new contention, unless the uncertainty be removed by extrinsic evidence showing the precise point involved and determined. *Russell v. Place*, 94 U. S. 606; *Lewis v. Ocean N. & P. Co.*, 125 N. Y. 341; *Bell v. Merrifield*, 109 N. Y. 202, 4 Am. St. Rep. 436; 1 Freeman, Judgments (4th ed.), sec. 276; *Belleville & St. L. R. Co. v. Leathe*, 84 Fed. 103; *Geary v. Bungs*, 138 Ill. 77; *Augir v. Ryan*, 63 Minn. 373. The burden of showing that a question raised in the present suit was litigated and determined in the former trial is upon the party alleging it. *Ryan v. Potwin*, 62 Ill. App. 134; *Zoeller v. Riley*, 100 N. Y. 102, 53 Am. Rep. 157. The record utterly fails to show that any of the material issues involved in this case were determined in the mandamus proceedings. It follows, then, that the judgments rendered upon those applications not only constitute no bar to this action, but are not, upon the record presented, conclusive upon any of the issues involved.

Complaint is made because the court, over defendant's objection, admitted evidence to the effect that Stull had a reputation in the neighborhood where he resided for being of a quarrelsome disposition. One of the theories of the defense was that Stull, plaintiff's assignor, and others instigated by him, in order to secure the adoption of the resolution for the compromise of Stull's claim against the school district, so conducted themselves at the school meeting as to raise a reasonable apprehension that opposition to the resolution would result in a breach of the peace on their part, and, in consequence, that a large number of the electors, some of whom were women, left the meeting before a vote was taken on the resolution, which would have been defeated but for such intimidating tactics. There may be some doubt whether the answer presents

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the foregoing theory of the defense. But we are not required to pass upon that question. Neither do we care to embarrass the parties in the future progress of the litigation by any expression of opinion as to the sufficiency of the evidence to warrant a submission of that theory to the jury. But, assuming the sufficiency of the answer in that regard, and that the evidence tends to show that Stull and his followers thus conducted themselves, then, evidence as to his reputation, as to being peaceable or otherwise, would tend to show the effect of such conduct on the minds of the electors, and for that purpose such evidence was properly received. Counsel assert that evidence of that character is never admissible in a civil action. That is a mistake. In *Golder v. Lund* 50 Neb. 867, this court said:

"We can certainly see no reason why it is not proper, in support of such a defense, to make proof of the plaintiff's character in a civil action for assault and battery as much as in a prosecution for homicide; but in such cases the proof must be of the plaintiff's general reputation."

Complaint is also made because the court received evidence of statements made by some of the electors upon leaving the meeting as to their reason for leaving, to the effect that they were leaving because they expected trouble over the resolution. It is argued that such statements are self-serving declarations and hearsay. But the statements were made at the meeting by electors who were a part of the meeting. They appear to have been made spontaneously, and, in view of the theory of the defense above stated, were properly received, we think, as a part of the *res gestæ*. In *Mathews v. Great N. R. Co.*, 81 Minn. 363, where declarations of a party as to his reason for going to a certain place were received in evidence, the court, in passing upon the competency of such evidence, said:

"The evidence was competent, for it falls within the rule that when it is material to show the purpose or reason

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for the departure of a person, or of an act done by him, his declarations of his purpose, or reason for so doing, made at or about the time he acts, if made in a natural way, and without any circumstances of suspicion, are admissible as original evidence." Citing 1 Greenleaf, Evidence (16th ed.), secs. 162d, 162e; *State v. Hayward*, 62 Minn. 474; *O'Connor v. Chicago, M. & St. P. R. Co.*, 27 Minn. 166; *Mutual Life Ins. Co. v. Hillmon*, 145 U. S. 285, 12 Sup. Ct. Rep. 909; *Commonwealth v. Trefethen*, 157 Mass. 180.

Other questions are discussed, but the probability that they will arise upon another trial is too remote to justify discussing them at this time.

For the error in the charge to the jury hereinbefore pointed out, it is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

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EDITH M. WILLITS, APPELLEE, v. LEE C. WILLITS, APPELLANT.\*

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,180.

1. **Marriage Contract.** While our law defines marriage as a civil contract, it differs from all other contracts in its consequences to the body politic, and for that reason in dealing with it or with the status resulting therefrom the state never stands indifferent, but is always a party whose interest must be taken into account.
2. **Marriage: VALIDITY.** A marriage, where one of the parties is under age of consent, but who is competent by the common law, is not

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\*See order as to attorney's fees, p. 235, post.

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void, but merely voidable, and until annulled by a court of competent jurisdiction is valid for all civil purposes.

3. ——: ANNULMENT: SUPPORT OF OFFSPRING. A court annulling a marriage at the suit of a husband who was under the age of consent when the marriage was solemnized may require him to pay a reasonable amount for the support and nurture of the issue of such marriage.
4. Suit Money: EXPENDITURES. In such case the court may also require the husband, if the circumstances of the party warrant it, to pay reasonable suit money to enable the wife to make a defense, and to reimburse her for expenditures on behalf of the family during the existence of the marriage relation.
5. Suit money may be allowed, in the sound discretion of the court, at any stage in the litigation and may be included in the final decree.

APPEAL from the district court for Harlan county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Flansburg & Williams, J. G. Thompson and Gomer Thomas*, for appellant.

*W. S. Morlan and R. L. Keester, contra.*

ALBERT, C.

The petition on which this cause was submitted is substantially as follows: That on the 15th day of November, 1903, the plaintiff and defendant were married in Harlan county, Nebraska, and immediately thereafter the defendant without just cause or excuse abandoned the plaintiff, and has ever since neglected to contribute any sum whatsoever for her support and maintenance; that on the 30th day of June, 1904, the plaintiff gave birth to a male child, the issue of the defendant, which is in her custody. That the plaintiff is in ill health, and without means of support for herself and the child, and without the necessary means of prosecuting the suit; that the defendant is the owner of a large amount of real and personal property, of about the value of \$40,000, and that his income therefrom and his earnings amount to at least \$5,000 a year.

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The prayer is for a reasonable allowance for the support of herself and child, and for such other relief as may be deemed equitable.

The answer admits the marriage between the parties and the birth of the child. By way of a cross-bill the defendant alleges that on the evening of the marriage between himself and the plaintiff he called upon the plaintiff at her father's house, whereupon the plaintiff's father accused the defendant of being the father of the plaintiff's unborn child, and threatened him with bodily injury unless he, at once, contracted a marriage with the plaintiff; that the defendant, believing that he was in danger of death or great bodily injury, and influenced by such fears, was then and there induced to contract a marriage with the plaintiff; that immediately after the marriage ceremony was performed he left the plaintiff, and that they never cohabited together as husband and wife. The defendant further alleges that at the time the said marriage was contracted he was under the age of 18, being only 17 years, 4 months and 11 days old, and that the plaintiff was over the age of 18 years. The defendant's guardian, upon order of the court, was joined as a party defendant.

The court made no finding on the question of duress, and while it is quite clear from the evidence that the defendant in contracting the marriage was influenced somewhat by fears of a prosecution for bastardy, those fears were born rather of a consciousness of guilt than of any threats made by the plaintiff's father. In other words, we think the evidence justifies a finding that the defendant contracted the marriage in the hope of escaping a prosecution for bastardy, and not because of any fear of the plaintiff's father or other relatives. The court found, as was necessary in view of the evidence, that the defendant at the time of the marriage was under the age of 18 years, and entered a decree annulling the marriage, but requiring the defendant to pay plaintiff the sum of \$150, which she had expended for lying-in expenses and for the support of the child up to the commencement of the suit, and that he

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provide for the support of the child, as follows: \$150 a year for the period of five years from the date of the decree; the sum of \$120 a year for the next five years, and the sum of \$100 a year for the next four years, should the child live so long. The court further ordered that the defendant should pay the further sum of \$100 as suit money for the benefit of the plaintiff's attorneys, and all costs. Defendant appeals.

The defendant takes the ground that, the court having found that he was under the age of 18 years when the marriage was solemnized, and entered a decree of annulment, the decree relates back to the date of the marriage, and places him in precisely the same position with respect to his liability to the plaintiff and for the support of the child that he would have occupied had the marriage never been contracted. In other words, his contention amounts to this, that by virtue of such finding and decree the plaintiff was never his wife, and the status of the issue of the marriage is merely that of an illegitimate child of the plaintiff and, consequently, he is required to provide for neither of them, either *pendente lite* or otherwise. This position seems to be untenable. While our law (Comp. St. 1905, sec. 1, ch. 52) defines marriage as a civil contract, it differs from all other contracts in its far reaching consequences to the body politic, and for that reason in dealing with it or the status resulting therefrom the state never stands indifferent, but is always a party whose interest must be taken into account. There can be no doubt that a decree of annulment leaves the parties in many respects as though the marriage had never taken place; in just what respects is not necessary to determine at this time. But a marriage, where one of the parties is under the age of consent, but who is competent by the common law, is not void, but merely voidable. Comp. St. 1905, sec. 2, ch. 25. It is valid for all civil purposes, until annulled by a judicial decree. *State v. Lowell*, 78 Minn. 166, 79 Am. St. Rep. 358 (extended note); *Gathings v. Williams*, 5 Ired. (N. Car.) 487, 44 Am. Dec. 49, and notes.

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We cannot overlook the fact that during the period of the recognized validity of such a marriage the rights of third parties—children who are the issue of what at the time was a lawful relation—frequently intervene, and that such rights would be prejudiced by placing the parties to the marriage contract in precisely the same position they would have occupied but for the marriage. There would be neither reason nor justice in a rule that would visit the consequences of a mutual indiscretion exclusively upon the wife. This case illustrates the iniquity of such a rule. The defendant is a young man of considerable fortune, and one whose age, judging from the evidence before us, cannot be accurately measured in years. The plaintiff is a young woman entirely without means of support. They are the parents of a child, born while the marriage was merely voidable. The plaintiff now addresses a prayer to the conscience of the court for an annulment of the marriage, a release from his liability for the support of his child, and incidentally, that the whole burden of its support and nurture be cast upon the shoulders of the plaintiff. Such a prayer does not appeal very strongly to the enlightened conscience of this age. It is in sharp conflict with the maxim, "He who seeks equity must do equity," as well as with sound public policy, which requires courts jealously to guard the rights of infants and take due precautions to prevent their becoming a public charge. It would seem that the lawmakers foresaw such contingencies and undertook to provide against them by the enactment of section 15, ch. 25, Comp. St. 1905, which is as follows: "Upon pronouncing a sentence or decree of nullity of a marriage, and also upon decreeing a divorce, whether from the bonds of matrimony or from bed and board, the court may make such further decree as it shall deem just and proper, concerning the care, custody, and maintenance of the minor children of the parties, and may determine with which of the parents the children or any of them shall remain." The foregoing section is sufficient in itself, we think, to

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justify a decree requiring the father of a child to provide for its support in cases of this character.

But the defendant contends that the allowance of \$150 to the plaintiff for her own use and \$100 for suit money is wholly unauthorized. So far as the suit money is concerned the defendant takes the position that, because the wife's suit was not brought for a divorce, but merely for maintenance, she is not entitled to suit money. Whatever the rule may be with regard to an allowance for suit money in an action brought merely for maintenance, it is well settled that in an action by the husband to annul a marriage the wife is entitled to alimony *pendente lite* and counsel fees, and the fact that the defendant proceeds by cross-petition instead of an original suit does not change the rule. See *Eliot v. Eliot*, 77 Wis. 634; *Wabber-son v. Wabber-son*, 57 N. Y. Supp. 405; *Higgins v. Sharp*, 164 N. Y. 4; *Allen v. Superior Court*, 133 Cal. 504; *Arey v. Arey*, 22 Wash. 261. It is intimated that the statute contemplates the allowance of alimony *pendente lite* before the final decree in the district court, and that a provision therefor in the final decree is erroneous. A different rule was announced in *Brasch v. Brasch*, 50 Neb. 73, where the court said:

"What sum a husband may be required to pay to his wife for her support during the pendency of a divorce suit, for her reasonable and necessary expenses in prosecuting or defending the action and for counsel fees and when such sums shall be paid—*i. e.*, whether before the final hearing of the action and as a condition precedent to the right of the husband to further prosecute or defend—are matters entirely within the discretion of the district court; and it is equally within the discretion of that court to postpone until the final hearing of the case the allowance, if any, made the wife for expenses and counsel fees in prosecuting or defending the action, and to render a judgment or decree against the husband at the time of disposing of the suit for such sum as appears to be reasonable and necessary; and the allowance made

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by the district court for the temporary support of the wife or for expenses and attorney's fees will not be disturbed, unless it appears that the court has abused its discretion."

As to the allowance to the plaintiff of \$150 for her own use it appears to have been made for the reason that she has incurred indebtedness to that amount "in the maintenance and support of the child and lying-in expenses." As before stated the marriage was valid until annulled by the court. Until it was annulled, therefore, the defendant was liable for the expenses of his family and the support and maintenance of his child. The expenses on which the court based the allowance of \$150 were a part of the family expenses. In other words, the plaintiff had incurred indebtedness to the amount of \$150 to defray expenses for which the defendant was liable. It does not seem at all unreasonable that the court in severing the relations between the parties should make provision whereby the defendant would be required to reimburse her or to relieve her from the burden of such indebtedness.

The plaintiff also complains of the decree because, as she insists, the allowance for the support of the child is insufficient and because of its omission to provide for permanent alimony. So far as the allowance for the support of the child is concerned, it is subject to revision from time to time (Comp. St. 1905, sec. 16, ch. 25), and we think, for the present, it should be permitted to stand. As to the claim for permanent alimony, such alimony is allowed in divorce proceedings in lieu of the common law right of support. *Greene v. Greene*, 49 Neb. 546, and citations. To support his wife is one of the obligations assumed by the husband by virtue of his marriage contract, and where, as in this case, the marriage is voidable, a release from such obligation is a part of the relief sought by the husband in a suit to annul the marriage. Permanent alimony is a statutory innovation, and we find no statutory authority for its allowance in a suit brought to annul a voidable marriage.

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In our judgment the decree, in view of all the circumstances, is in no respect erroneous, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following order was entered April 5, 1906:

ALBERT, C.

The motion made in this court for an allowance to the plaintiff for suit money was not called to our attention, either by brief or otherwise, and for that reason was not considered in the original opinion. Subsequently, our attention was called thereto and a further hearing had. We have no doubt that the plaintiff is entitled to a reasonable allowance for attorneys' fees for the services of her attorneys in this court, and are of the opinion that an allowance of \$100 therefor would be reasonable.

It is therefore recommended that the plaintiff be allowed the sum of \$100 as attorneys' fees for the services of her attorneys in this court and that the same be taxed as part of the costs in this court in favor of her attorneys.

JACKSON, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the plaintiff be allowed the sum of \$100 as attorneys' fees for the services of her attorneys in this court, and that the same be taxed as part of the costs in this court in favor of her attorneys.

**MARY FITZGERALD v. KIMBALL BROTHERS COMPANY.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,235.

1. **Principal and Agent:** EVIDENCE. The declarations of an alleged agent are not admissible in evidence for the purpose of establishing or enlarging his authority.
2. **Contract:** EVIDENCE. The authority of an agent to execute a contract cannot be established by evidence of his declarations as to the nature of a conversation carried on between him and his alleged principal by telephone during the negotiations.
3. ——: RATIFICATION. Knowledge by the principal of the material facts is an essential element of an effective ratification by him of the unauthorized act of his agent. *O'Shea v. Rice*, 49 Neb. 893.
4. Evidence examined, and held insufficient to sustain a finding that the alleged agent had authority to bind the defendant by the contract in suit.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*James Manahan and T. J. Doyle*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mockett & Polk, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

This is an action on a written contract which purports to have been executed on behalf of the defendant, plaintiff in error, by James Manahan, as her attorney. It is thus signed: "Mary Fitzgerald, Admx., by James Manahan, Atty." The contract provides for the construction of an elevator by the plaintiffs in a building on the property hereafter mentioned, for which the defendant, by the terms of the contract, undertook to pay \$850. The plaintiffs performed their part of the contract, and upon the refusal of the defendant to pay the stipulated price brought this action. Whether Mr. Manahan had authority to bind the defendant by the contract in suit was the principal question litigated below. The jury resolved that question

in favor of the plaintiffs and returned a general verdict in their favor. From a judgment thereon the defendant prosecutes proceedings in error.

It appears from the record that in 1901 the defendant was, and for many years had been, administratrix of the estate of her deceased husband, and as such had charge of certain real estate in the city of Lincoln which she leased, managed and kept in a state of repair. Prior to the date of the contract a mortgage on this real estate had been foreclosed in the federal court. A stay of the order of sale was agreed upon whereby the defendant's right to redeem was extended, in the expectation that the property in that time could be sold for more than sufficient to satisfy the decree. The alleged contract was made September 30, 1901, and while this stay was in force. James Manahan, who, it is claimed, signed the contract as defendant's attorney, was at that time, and for many years had been, the attorney and, to some extent, the business adviser of the defendant as administratrix of her husband's estate, and as such had represented her in the foreclosure proceedings just mentioned. According to the testimony adduced on behalf of the plaintiff, Mr. Manahan, acting in his such capacity, participated in the negotiations leading up to the alleged contract, a part of which was conducted by the defendant in person or, at least, in her presence. Afterwards, at the date of the contract, an agent of the plaintiff called at Mr. Manahan's office, with the contract in question ready for the signatures. A Mr. Muldoon, who was bookkeeper and, as is said in the evidence, general office man of the defendant as administratrix, was also present at the time. The defendant at that time had not assented to the contract nor is there any evidence tending to show that up to that time she had authorized Mr. Manahan, or any other person, to enter into the contract either as agent or attorney for her in her representative capacity or otherwise. The plaintiff's agent was produced as a witness for the purpose of showing what occurred at Mr. Manahan's office at the time re-

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fferred to, and his testimony is now relied upon as establishing the fact that Mr. Manahan was duly authorized to execute the contract on behalf of the defendant. His examination touching that matter, so far as is material, is as follows: "Q. Was it (the contract) gone over by you, Manahan and Muldoon? A. Yes, sir; it was gone over and talked over and the price fixed. Q. What did Mr. Manahan do after you and he and Muldoon had gone over Exhibit 12 (the contract) on September, 1901? A. He spoke about the price, and called up Mrs. Fitzgerald about the matter. Q. What did Manahan say at that time over the 'phone? A. He stated that Kimball was here with the contract ready to fix up the elevator matter. I don't remember just what words he used, but it was that we were ready to close the matter, and wanted to know if we should go ahead with the contract. Q. After the telephone conversation, what did he say to you? A. He turned around and said that Mrs. Fitzgerald said it was all right. Q. Again, handing you Exhibit 1, I will ask you who signed 'Mary Fitzgerald, Admx, by James Manahan, Atty,' if you know? A. Mr. Manahan signed it." This evidence was all received over the defendant's objections. The testimony of Mr. Manahan, who was called by the defendant, is to the effect that he informed the agent that he did not think Mrs. Fitzgerald would sign the contract, that she did not want the elevator; but that he finally telephoned the defendant, informed her of the presence of the agent and the subject of their conversation, and asked for instructions; that her reply was to the effect that under no circumstances would she assent to a contract involving any personal liability on her part, but that, if the plaintiffs were willing to put in the elevator and look to the building itself for their pay, it would be all right; that he informed the agent as to the nature of the defendant's reply, and stated to him that the building ought to be able to pay for the elevator, and that as he was representing the estate in the foreclosure proceedings he would sign the contract as attorney. He further testified that the agent assented to this, and the contract

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was accordingly signed as hereinbefore shown. As to what passed between the defendant and Mr. Manahan in their conversation over the telephone on the occasion mentioned, her testimony is substantially the same as his.

It also appears in evidence that the defendant, as administratrix, had previously leased the building to a third party, and one of the conditions of the lease was that she should provide an elevator answering to the description of that in the contract in suit. There is evidence tending to show that when the lease was made she had such contract in her possession in the form of an unaccepted bid, and stated to the lessee, in effect, that she intended to accept it. Shortly after the elevator was constructed, the property was sold under the decree of foreclosure and entirely absorbed in the satisfaction of the decree. While the contract purports to bind the defendant in her capacity as administratrix, it is conceded that it is not binding upon the estate, and the suit is against her personally. Consequently, the power, or lack of power, of an administratrix to bind the estate by contract, as well as the power of such officer to delegate her authority, are questions that require no discussion at this time. What seems to be the decisive question in the case is whether the defendant authorized Mr. Manahan to execute the contract.

One item of evidence relied on by the plaintiffs to establish such authority is the testimony of its agent, hereinbefore set out at some length, as to what Mr. Manahan has stated concerning the result of his conversation with the defendant over the telephone just before the contract was signed. Such statement, at most, was a mere declaration of the alleged agent as to his agency and the extent of his authority. As such, it was incompetent and should have been excluded, because, while the declarations of an agent during the transaction of business for his principal, within the scope of the agency, if made in relation to such business, are frequently admitted as part of the *res gestæ*, they are never admissible to prove the fact of agency itself; that fact must be established *aliunde*. 1 Jones, Evidence, sec.

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256. His statements, ordinarily, are not admissible for the purpose of establishing or enlarging his authority. Nor can his authority be established by showing that he claimed to have the powers which he assumed to exercise. His acts and statements cannot be used against the principal until the fact of agency has been established by other evidence. Mechem, *Agency*, sec. 100. This court has often held that agency cannot be established by the declarations of the alleged agent. *Anheuser-Busch Brewing Ass'n v. Murray*, 47 Neb. 627; *Barmby v. Wolfe*, 44 Neb. 77; *Norberg v. Plummer*, 58 Neb. 410; *Nostrum v. Halliday*, 39 Neb. 828; *Burke v. Frye*, 44 Neb. 223. The fact that his alleged declarations were with respect to a conversation between him and his alleged principal over a telephone would not change the rule. They were still mere declarations made without the sanction of an oath. It would be a very dangerous rule that would permit an alleged agent to bind another by his mere statement of what the person for whom he pretended to act said to him over a telephone.

Our attention is called to the evidence tending to show that the plaintiffs' bid for the construction of the elevator, with other bids for the same work, was gone over in the presence of the defendant, and her statements to the effect that she intended to accept it; that she had leased the property to a third party with the understanding that an elevator answering that description was to be constructed. Such evidence merely tends to show that she contemplated making a contract, but throws no light whatever on the question of Mr. Manahan's authority to make a contract for her.

The plaintiffs also put forward the claim that the contract was ratified by the defendant. One of the essential elements of ratification is knowledge on the part of the principal of the material facts. *O'Shea v. Rice*, 49 Neb. 893. An agent cannot bind his principal beyond the limits of his actual or apparent authority; and the declared willingness of a principal to ratify a conditional contract will not operate as a ratification of an unconditional contract.

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of which he is ignorant. *Henry & Coatsworth Co. v. Haltier*, 58 Neb. 685; *Bullard v. De Groff*, 59 Neb. 783. The defendant in this case no doubt saw the work progressing, but it was upon a building in which it does not appear she had any interest, save as administratrix of the estate of her husband. She had authorized Mr. Manahan to allow the work to proceed only in the event that the plaintiffs would look to the building itself for payment. It does not appear that it was ever brought to her knowledge that he had exceeded his authority, and she had a perfect right to assume, as she saw the work progress, that it was progressing according to the terms of the contract she had authorized Mr. Manahan to make.

The plaintiff bases some argument on the doctrine of ostensible authority. We are unable to find anything in the record upon which that argument can be based. Mr. Manahan was not the defendant's general agent and was clothed with no ostensible authority to bind the defendant personally. The plaintiff's agent knew this, and knew that he was receiving specific instructions over the telephone. It is an elementary rule of the law of agency that one dealing with an agent possessing no ostensible authority whereby those dealing with him may be misled is bound at his peril to ascertain the extent of his authority. Mechem, Agency, sec. 276. It seems to us that there is an utter lack of evidence showing Mr. Manahan's authority to bind defendant, and, as that is a vital point in the case, that the verdict cannot stand.

It is therefore recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

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Parkins v Missouri P. R. Co.

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**JOSEPH F. PARKINS, APPELLEE, V. MISSOURI PACIFIC  
RAILWAY COMPANY, APPELLANT.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,361.

1. **Pleadings: CONSTRUCTION.** Where a party fails to test the sufficiency of a petition by demurrer, but answers to the merits and proceeds to trial on the theory that it tenders a certain issue, which is litigated and submitted to the jury, if by any reasonable construction of the language the pleadings can be construed to raise such issue they will be held to do so.
2. **Sales: TENDER: EVIDENCE.** Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain a finding that the commodity which the plaintiff was able, ready and willing to deliver in pursuance of a contract of sale answered the requirements of such contract.
3. ——: ACTION: BURDEN OF PROOF. In an action for breach of contract for refusal on the part of the vendee to accept the goods tendered, the burden of proof that the goods tendered met the requirements of the contract is upon the plaintiff.
4. ——: REFUSAL TO ACCEPT. Where the goods tendered do not meet such requirements, the vendee may refuse to accept them, and is not required to assign any ground for his refusal.
5. **Estoppel: BURDEN OF PROOF.** Where a party pleads and relies on an estoppel, the burden of proof is upon him to establish the facts upon which the estoppel is based.
6. **Measure of Damages.** In an action for breach of contract of sale for refusal on the part of vendee to accept the goods, where the vendor procures the goods from third parties, the measure of damages is the difference between the cost at which plaintiff could have procured and delivered the goods at the time and place specified by the contract and the contract price, with interest from the date of the accrual of the action. *Wittenberg v. Mollyneaux*, 59 Neb. 203, denying the right to interest for breach of contract, modified.
7. **Nominal Damages.** In such cases, the computation must be based upon data furnished by the pleadings and the evidence, and if they fail to furnish such data no recovery can be had beyond nominal damages.

**APPEAL from the district court for Sarpy county: ALEXANDER C. TROUP, JUDGE. Reversed.**

*John F. Stout, James W. Orr and B. P. Waggener, for appellant.*

*F. T. Ransom, Weaver & Giller, H. Z. Wedgwood and W. R. Patrick, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

This is the second time a judgment in this case has been presented to this court for review. See *Parkins v. Missouri P. R. Co.*, 4 Neb. (Unof.) 1, 13; 72 Neb. 831. For convenience we reiterate so much of the former statement of facts as may be necessary to understand the discussion which follows. On the 5th day of October 1892, the parties entered into a contract in writing as follows: "This agreement made this 5th day of October, A. D. 1892, by and between the Missouri Pacific Railway Company, party of the first part, and Joseph F. Parkins, lessee of the Springfield Gravel Company, party of the second part, Witnesseth: That the said party of the second part agrees to deliver to the party of the first part, in such amounts as may be designated from time to time by said party of the first part, 50,000 yards, cubic measure, of good, clean, marketable gravel, such as shall be in the judgment of the superintendent of the said party of the first part suitable for ballasting the roadbed of said party of the first part, to be delivered on board cars and measured on the cars by the party appointed by the said Missouri Pacific Railway Company to receive the same; the said gravel to be delivered in two years from this date, but times and amounts of delivery of gravel within such period to be determined by the party of the first part as it shall need the same from time to time. In consideration of the premises, the said party of the first part agrees to pay for said gravel 45 cents a cubic yard delivered on the cars as aforesaid, the payments to be made monthly for the gravel furnished during the preceding month. In witness whereof the parties here-to have set their hands this 5th day of October, 1892."

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In pursuance of this contract the plaintiff in 1892 delivered to the defendant about 2,000, and in 1893 about 14,000, cubic yards of gravel, and in subsequent years a quantity sufficient to make the total amount delivered 21,816 cubic yards. None of the gravel delivered in 1892 was used for ballast, and of that delivered in 1893 only about 15 per cent. was used for that purpose. But the whole amount delivered in 1894, and it would seem at least a portion of that delivered in 1895, was used for ballasting the defendant's roadbed. In June, 1894, in response to plaintiff's request to take more of the gravel, the defendant placed its refusal on the ground of a lack of coal, owing to a strike then prevailing among the coal mines in certain localities. In the following September it refused a like request on the ground of the then prevailing business depression, and suggested an extension of the contract for another year. A few days later it renewed its refusal on the same ground, and agreed to extend the contract for another year, and by virtue of such extension the contract was extended to October 5, 1895. In the spring of 1895 the plaintiff again urged the defendant to take more of the gravel, and in response was informed that the defendant had not yet decided how much ballast it could take for use in that year, but that it would not be able to take very much, for the reason "that this company, in line with all others, has got to keep pretty close to shore on account of decreased earnings." The testimony of the plaintiff tends to show that the defendant at no time during the life of the contract, as extended, objected to receiving the remainder of the gravel on any ground other than those just mentioned. On the other hand, evidence adduced by the defendant tends to show that the gravel was unsuitable, both in fact and in the judgment of its superintendent, for ballasting its roadbed; that it made complaint of the gravel on those grounds to the plaintiff in the latter part of 1894 or early in 1895, and early in the summer of the latter year on the same grounds refused to accept the remainder of the gravel, and notified the plaintiff, not only of such

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refusal, but of the grounds upon which it was based. After this notice is claimed to have been given, the defendant ordered more of the gravel, but it was not used for ballast, but appears to have been taken under the contract. Some appears to have been taken as late as 1898. The defendant having refused to accept the remainder of the 50,000 cubic yards of gravel, the plaintiff in 1899 brought this action, assigning the defendant's refusal to take the remainder of the gravel as a breach of the contract and asking damages.

In his amended petition the plaintiff sets forth the terms of his contract with the defendant and the extension thereof for one year, the quantity of gravel he furnished the defendant thereunder, including that furnished after the time the contract had expired by the terms of the extension, payment for the quantity of gravel furnished and the refusal of the defendant to accept the remainder of the 50,000 yards under the contract. The petition also contains the following averments: "Plaintiff says that the gravel furnished, and received and paid for by defendant under the terms of said contract as aforesaid was all of the same kind and quality and was all accepted and received by defendant under the terms of said contract and was used by the defendant for the purpose of ballasting its roadbed, and was acceptable and suitable in the judgment of its superintendent for that purpose. Plaintiff further states that he was at all times during the period provided for the delivery and acceptance of said gravel, and the extension of the time of the delivery of the same, ready, willing and able to furnish to the defendant the remainder of said gravel, to wit, 30,000 cubic yards of the same kind and quality as provided for in said contract, and as was delivered and accepted by the defendant in the 20,000 yards hereinbefore mentioned as having been delivered and accepted by defendant." The damages are laid at \$9,000.

The answer admits the execution of the contract; that defendant received a certain quantity of the gravel thereunder and paid for the same, and denies all allegations not admitted. Among other affirmative allegations in the an-

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swer are the following: "That it was impossible to determine, without using the same, whether the gravel furnished by plaintiff was suitable for ballasting the roadbed of defendant company, and for that purpose a portion of such gravel was received, used and paid for, to the extent taken; that after using the same it became evident, and it was the judgment and opinion of the superintendent of this defendant company, that the gravel furnished by the plaintiff was not suitable for ballasting defendant's roadbed, and was not in accordance with the contract made between the parties, and said plaintiff was notified that the gravel furnished by him was not, in the judgment of the defendant's superintendent, suitable for ballasting the roadbed of this defendant, and that no more of such gravel would be taken or used for such purpose, and the gravel so furnished by said plaintiff was, as a matter of fact, unfit and unsuitable for the purpose for which the same was contracted to be purchased, and said plaintiff was so informed, and the contract was terminated; that under the terms and conditions of said agreement the superintendent of defendant company was made the sole judge as to the gravel being fit and suitable for the purpose of ballasting defendant's roadbed."

Among other things the reply contains the following: "And, further replying to said answer, alleges that under the terms of such contract and in accordance therewith the plaintiff delivered to the defendant the 21,816 yards of gravel hereinbefore mentioned under said contract, which the defendant received, accepted and paid for as provided by the contract. That during the time for the delivery of the gravel under said contract the plaintiff demanded of defendant that it take and pay for the remainder of the gravel, and the defendant refused so to do, and assigned and asserted at the time as the only reason for such refusal that it was impossible for the defendant to take the remainder of the gravel under said contract on account of the dearth of coal for engine use on defendant's railway, the financial panic existing at the time, and decreased

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earnings of defendant's railway; \* \* \* that by reason of such conduct and attitude of the defendant the said defendant is estopped now to assert, or claim, or plead as a defense to plaintiff's said action that it refused to receive said gravel for the reason that said gravel was not suitable, in the judgment of the superintendent of defendant, for ballasting defendant's roadbed, or to assign, assert or plead any other reason than the said asserted and assigned reasons for its refusal to receive the remainder of said gravel called for in said contract."

A trial resulted in a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff in the sum of \$11,220.65, and defendant appeals.

It is first contended that the petition upon which the cause was submitted does not state facts sufficient to constitute a cause of action. This contention is based in part upon a construction which the defendant insists should be placed upon the contract in suit. Such construction is that the contract did not bind the defendant to take 50,000 cubic yards of gravel, even though the gravel offered answered all the requirements of the contract, but only such quantity and at such times as might be determined by the defendant itself. We do not think the contract admits of this construction. Thus construed the contract practically would leave it optional with the defendant whether to take any of the gravel, and, to that extent, the contract would be unilateral and binding on neither party. The contract expressly provides for the delivery of 50,000 cubic yards of gravel within two years. The clauses, "such amounts as may be designated from time to time by said party of the first part," and, "but times and amounts of delivery of gravel within such period (two years), to be determined by the party of the first part as it shall need the same from time to time," are not to be taken as giving the defendant an option to take none of the gravel, or only such portion of the 50,000 yards as it might see fit to take, but merely as providing for a delivery of the entire 50,000 yards by instalments, and to enable the defendant to accommodate the delivery of the instalments to its requirements.

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It is also contended that there is no averment in the petition to the effect that the remainder of the 50,000 yards of gravel, which the defendant stood ready and willing to deliver under the contract, was suitable, in the judgment of the defendant's superintendent, for ballasting its roadbed. We have set out that portion of the petition relied on as covering this ground. It shows that the gravel actually furnished the defendant under the contract was of the quality specified in the contract, and suitable, in the judgment of the superintendent, for ballasting the defendant's roadbed. Then follows the allegation to the effect that the remainder of the 50,000 yards of gravel, which plaintiff was ready and willing to furnish, was of the same kind and quality as provided in the contract, and "as was delivered and accepted by the defendant in the 20,000 yards hereinbefore mentioned as having been delivered and accepted by the defendant." The petition upon which the cause was submitted the second time stands just as it stood when the first trial was had. Before answering, the defendant filed a special, as well as a general, demurrer, but withdrew both before a ruling was had thereon, and answered. At both the first and the second trial one of the principal questions litigated was whether the gravel had been approved by the defendant's superintendent, and it appears from the evidence adduced, and instructions respectively tendered by the parties, that they, as well as the court, proceeded on the theory that the pleadings presented that issue. Where a party fails to test the sufficiency of a petition by demurrer, but answers to the merits and proceeds to trial on the theory that the petition tenders a certain issue, and such issue is litigated, if by any reasonable construction of the language the pleadings can be construed to raise that issue they will be held to do so. This is only another way of saying that this court will, when possible, adopt a construction of the pleadings in which the parties themselves have concurred. Tested by this rule, the petition tenders the issue in question.

Another question raised is whether the verdict is sus-

tained by sufficient evidence, the defendant contending that there is a total lack of evidence tending to show that the remainder of the 50,000 cubic yards, which the plaintiff was ready to furnish, was suitable, in the judgment of the defendant's superintendent, for ballasting its roadbed. To appreciate the force of this contention it should be kept in mind that the defendant expressly stipulated in the contract for gravel suitable in the judgment of its superintendent, for ballasting its roadbed, and that the plaintiff, instead of attempting to allege and prove that the gravel was in fact suitable for such purpose, and that the approval of the superintendent was capriciously or arbitrarily withheld, or any other facts that would excuse a showing of such approval, placed himself squarely upon the proposition that the remainder of the gravel was suitable, in the judgment of defendant's superintendent, for the purpose specified. We think the evidence is sufficient to sustain a finding in favor of the plaintiff upon that point. It is true there is no evidence that the superintendent ever expressly gave it as his opinion that the gravel was suitable for ballast. On the contrary, the evidence of the superintendent himself is to the effect that the suitability of the gravel for that purpose could only be determined after an actual test, and that late in 1894, or early in 1895, he reached the conclusion, after such test, that the gravel would not answer that purpose. Besides, there is a large amount of expert testimony to the effect that the gravel was in fact unsuitable for ballast. But opposed to all such evidence are the facts that the defendant accepted a large portion of the gravel in instalments and during the life of the contract, and that a considerable portion of the gravel thus accepted was used for ballast and was put to such use by the superintendent or under his orders. These facts, coupled with the further fact, which the testimony of the plaintiff tends to establish, that during the life of the contract the defendant's refusals to accept the remainder of the gravel were based exclusively on other grounds, reasonably warrant the inference that the superintendent considered the gravel

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suitable for the purpose for which it was intended by the terms of the contract.

The defendant, in this connection, claims that its contract with the plaintiff was made with reference to what is known as the Springfield Gravel Company pit, and with the understanding that the gravel delivered under the contract should be taken from that pit, and that contrary to such understanding a portion of the gravel delivered prior to 1894 was taken from what is known as the Union Pacific or Birkhauser pit. Should it be conceded that the parties contracted with reference to the Springfield Gravel Company pit, defendant's complaint that a portion of the gravel was taken from another pit is unavailing at this time. There are two Union Pacific pits, the old and the new. The gravel in the old pit appears to be inferior, while that in the new seems to be at least equal to that in the Springfield pit. The gravel furnished by the plaintiff, aside from what was taken from the Springfield pit, was all taken from the new Union Pacific pit. It was taken from that pit with the defendant's full knowledge, and was never objected to on that ground. In fact, when the contract in suit was extended, it was at the defendant's suggestion that plaintiff procured an extension of his lease of the Union Pacific pit in order that he might continue to furnish defendant gravel therefrom if he saw fit. It would seem, therefore, that defendant's complaint that a portion of the gravel was taken from the Union Pacific pit has no just foundation.

After stating the substance of the petition, answer and reply at some length the court gave the jury this instruction: "You are instructed that the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff in this case to show by a preponderance of the evidence all the material allegations in his petition which are denied in the defendant's answer, before he can recover; that is to say: (1) That the plaintiff must thus prove that he was able, ready and willing to furnish to defendant under the terms of the contract between said parties the remainder of the 50,000 cubic yards of gravel

not delivered; (2) That the same was good, clean, marketable gravel, and, in the judgment of defendant's superintendent, suitable for ballasting the roadbed of defendant company; (3) that he has sustained damages in some amount by reason of the failure of the defendant to accept the remainder of said gravel, and that such damages have not been paid. Likewise, the burden of proof is upon the defendant to establish by a preponderance of the evidence all the material allegations of new matter contained in its answer, which are denied in plaintiff's reply; that is to say: (1) The defendant must prove that it objected and refused to take the remainder of the gravel under said contract for the reason that the same was not good, clean, marketable gravel or, in the judgment of the defendant's superintendent, not suitable for ballasting the roadbed of defendant company; and (2) that it so notified plaintiff prior to October 5, 1895."

In another paragraph of the charge, after presenting plaintiff's theory of the case, the court used this language: "But if, on the other hand, you believe from all the evidence in the case that that portion of the gravel which was delivered to and accepted by the defendant was not good, clean, marketable gravel, or was not, in the judgment of defendant's superintendent \* \* \* suitable for ballasting the roadbed of defendant company as provided in said contract, and that the defendant refused to take any more of said gravel for that reason, and you should further find that the defendant so notified plaintiff prior to October 5, 1895, then said contract would be thereby terminated, and your verdict should be for the defendant."

These instructions taken together may be reduced to this proposition: That, although the remainder of the gravel which the plaintiff was able, ready and willing to furnish, did not meet the requirements of the contract, the plaintiff, nevertheless, would be entitled to a verdict, unless the defendant had shown by a preponderance of the evidence that it had based its refusal to accept the gravel on that ground, and he had so notified the plaintiff prior to

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October 5, 1895. These instructions were intended to cover both the plaintiff's theories, namely, that the remainder of the gravel was suitable in the judgment of the defendant's superintendent, for ballasting its roadbed, and that the defendant, by basing its refusal on other grounds, is estopped to deny that it was thus suitable. As to the former theory, the plaintiff now disclaims any attempt to show that the approval of the superintendent was arbitrarily or capriciously withheld, but places himself squarely on the proposition that the gravel was suitable, in the superintendent's judgment, for that purpose. Consequently, in order to show a breach of the contract, the burden of proof was upon him to show that the gravel answered that requirement of the contract. If it did not answer that requirement then the tender of such gravel, or what amounts to a tender, was not a tender of performance on his part of the contract, and the defendant had a right to refuse it, and was not required to give any reason for its refusal. Consequently, an instruction which required the defendant to show that it had based its refusal on a specific ground, and given notice to the plaintiff of the ground on which its refusal was based is erroneous.

The theory of estoppel is presented by that portion of the reply heretofore set out, and, as to such theory, the court appears to have been of the opinion that, if the remainder of the gravel was of the same quality as that which had been accepted and paid for by the defendant under the contract from time to time, and the defendant had placed its refusal to accept the remainder on the ground of a scarcity of coal or money, or upon any other ground than that it was not of the quality called for by the contract, or was unsuitable, in the opinion of its superintendent, for ballast, and continued to place its refusal on such ground until after the expiration of the contract, it would not be permitted to shift its ground after the contract had terminated. Assuming that such acts on the part of the defendant would give rise to an estoppel, the burden of establishing the facts constituting the estoppel

would rest upon the plaintiff. One of those facts is that the defendant's refusal was based exclusively on grounds other than that the gravel did not answer the requirements of the contract, or was unsuitable, in the judgment of the superintendent for ballast. And no matter how strong a *prima facie* case the plaintiff may have made on the question of estoppel, the burden of proof never shifted to the defendant, but remained with the plaintiff to the end of the trial. That being true, an instruction, or set of instructions, which required the defendant to show by a preponderance of the evidence that its refusal to take the remainder of the gravel was not based exclusively on matters outside the contract, and that it so notified the plaintiff, is erroneous.

It appears in evidence that on the day the plaintiff concluded to contract with the defendant, he procured a lease for two years of the Springfield Gravel Company pit, by the terms of which he was to pay his lessor 30 cents a yard for all screened, and 25 cents a yard for all unscreened gravel "sold, loaded and shipped" from this pit by the plaintiff during the life of the lease. Later the plaintiff leased the Union Pacific or Birkhauser pit, paying \$250 for the privilege of taking gravel therefrom in such quantities as he saw fit for a term ending September 1, 1893. Both leases were afterwards extended to meet the extension of the contract in suit; the first on the original terms, the second without any further consideration. It also appears that the plaintiff was under a contract in writing with another party, whereby such other party was to take the gravel from the Springfield pit and load it on the defendant's cars, according to the contract in suit, for 15 cents a yard. But in addition to plaintiff's undertaking to pay 15 cents for such services, the contract contained the following: "All expenses of measuring and weighing to be paid for by the party of the first part (plaintiff). The party of the first part agrees to furnish all material at the pit for building and repairing all traps required by the party of the second part for the convenient and rapid load-

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ing of the gravel; to furnish the use of boarding house, stables, blacksmith shops and tools, without expense to party of the second part while performing the above described work and to be paid by days wages for all cleaning up of the gravel pit and all extra work done and to keep the railway track in good repair, so that cars can easily be moved on the same. And the said party of the first part agrees to pay the said party of the second part for all loss of time while waiting for cars, and for all repair of tracks for material to build or repair track, and for all damages for the cancelation of this contract before there are 2,000 cars of gravel loaded." There is no evidence upon which to base an estimate of what it would have cost the plaintiff or what it would have been reasonably worth to comply with the foregoing provisions. There is testimony tending to show that the reasonable cost of taking the gravel from the Union Pacific or Birkhauser pit, and delivering it on board defendant's cars, to the place plaintiff was required to deliver it, would have been about 20 cents a yard. But whether this included the additional expenses contemplated by that portion of the contract for loading gravel just quoted is not quite clear. There is no evidence as to the value of the services of the plaintiff in superintending or overseeing the carrying out of his contract with the defendant.

On this state of the record the court gave two instructions as to the measure of damages. They are substantially the same in principle and one is as follows: "You are instructed that uncontroverted evidence in this case shows that there were delivered by the plaintiff to the defendant under the contract sued on 21,816 yards of gravel, and that amount was received and paid for by the defendant. Now, if you find for the plaintiff, you will determine from the evidence the amount of plaintiff's damages in the following manner: You will determine from the evidence what it would have cost the plaintiff to have furnished and delivered to the defendant within the time limited in the contract the remainder of 50,000 cubic yards of gravel con-

tracted for, and, if you find such cost would have been less than the contract price between plaintiff and defendant under said contract, you will deduct such cost of furnishing and delivering the gravel from the contract price; upon this difference between the cost and contract price you will calculate simple interest at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum from October 5, 1895, to the 6th day of March, 1905, that being the first day of the present term of this court, and this interest you will add to the difference between the contract price and the cost price, and the sum resulting therefrom will be the amount of damages you should return in favor of the plaintiff." Aside from the matter of interest, which we shall notice presently, we think the instruction correctly states the rule for the measure of damages in cases of this character. In such cases—that is, in cases where the plaintiff procures the commodity to be furnished from third parties—upon the vendee's wrongful refusal to accept the goods, the measure of damages is the difference between the agreed price and what it would cost the plaintiff to procure and deliver the goods according to the terms of the contract. 3 Sutherland, Damages (3d ed.), sec. 648; *Allen v. Murray*, 87 Wis. 41; *Danforth v. Walker*, 37 Vt. 239. But it would seem that the evidence is not sufficiently clear to admit of an application of the rule in this instance. From what has already been said it appears that, while the price at which the plaintiff procured, or might have procured, the gravel at the pits is sufficiently clear, its delivery to the defendant would have involved elements of expense which cannot be computed from the data furnished by the record.

It is contended that the instruction under consideration is erroneous, in that it directed the jury to allow interest on whatever damages they found. Whether interest is allowable in an action for unliquidated damages is a question upon which the courts of this country are not in accord, and upon which the decisions of the same court are frequently in conflict. In regard to interest in actions for breach of contract under the title of "Damages," in 13 Cyc.

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p. 85, it is said: "The decisions are very conflicting as to the allowance of interest by way of damages in cases of breach of contract, unless the rate or amount is fixed in the contract itself. The allowance of interest in such cases was formerly a question somewhat within the discretion of the jury; but it is now considered more a question of law for the court. The better rule on this subject seems to be that such interest as damages will be allowed, especially where the damages are capable of being definitely ascertained." See authorities there cited.

Many of the authorities denying interest in such cases merely hold against the allowance of interest *eo nomine*, leaving it inferable that the jury might include interest in the general award of damages. Other cases, disallowing interest, appear to proceed on the theory that damages are awarded in part, at least, as a punishment against the wrongdoer, and that, so long as the damages are uncertain and ascertainable only by verdict, it would be unjust to allow interest. Another line of decisions appear to be based on the provisions of local statutes with respect to interest, in that such statutes do not contemplate the allowance of interest, on unliquidated claims. But it would be a hopeless task to attempt to analyze the decisions on this question or to classify them according to fixed principles. We can only say with the author above quoted: "The better rule on this subject seems to be that such interest as damages will be allowed, especially where the damages are capable of being definitely ascertained." In reaching this conclusion we have not overlooked *Wittenberg v. Mollyneaux*, 59 Neb. 203, where the court announced this doctrine:

"If the right to damages for breach of a contract is matter of reasonable litigation, and the amount to be recovered, if any, is unliquidated and must be fixed, not by mere computation but by suit, interest may not be allowed for time precedent to the settlement of the right to a recovery and the ascertainment of the amount."

In support of that rule the court in that case cited,

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*Shipman v. State*, 44 Wis. 458; *Vietti v. Nesbitt*, 22 Nev. 390, 41 Pac. 151; *Swinnerton v. Argonaut L. & D. Co.*, 112 Cal. 375, 44 Pac. 719; 2 Sutherland, Damages (3d ed.), sec. 347; *Pacific Postal T. C. Co. v. Fleischner*, 66 Fed. 899; *Hooper v. Patterson*, 32 Pac. (Cal.) 514.

As to the Wisconsin case, the rule as there announced is not in harmony with some of the former, as well as some of the later, cases of that court. *Hinckley v. Beckwith*, 13 Wis. 34, was an action for breach of contract, and the court held that the allowance of interest was discretionary with the jury. The theory that interest is a matter of discretion with the jury is examined and repudiated in *Dana v. Fiedler*, 12 N. Y. 40, 62 Am. Dec. 130, the court holding that it was allowable as a matter of law. A later Wisconsin case, *Allen v. Murray*, *supra*, was also an action for breach of contract, and the court approved an instruction permitting the jury to allow interest, following *Hinckley v. Beckwith*, *supra*. The Nevada case was an action to recover the amount due on a contract, and interest was disallowed because the claim did not fall within the provisions of the statute of that state allowing interest. The court, however, there recognize the rule of allowing interest in actions for damages, merely as damages. The California case is based on a line of decisions of that state, one of which is *Cox v. McLaughlin*, 76 Cal. 60, 18 Pac. 100. In that case, the court quotes 2 Sutherland, Damages (3d ed.), sec. 347, where, after laying down the rule that interest is not allowable on unliquidated claims, the author adds: "The allowance of interest as damages is not dependent on this rigid test." In *Brady v. Wilcoxon*, 44 Cal. 239, the court, although denying the right of interest on an unliquidated claim prior to judgment said: "On such demands, interest, *eo nomine*, cannot be allowed."

It would seem, then, that the rule in *Wittenberg v. Mollyneaux*, *supra*, while supported by the single Wisconsin case it cites, is in conflict with both the previous and subsequent holdings of that court, and that the other authorities it cites as supporting the rule recognize the

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right to allow interest in actions sounding in damages, not, however, as interest, but merely as a part of the damages. The practical value of the distinction is not quite clear.

It seems to us that the case at bar, in itself, furnishes a strong argument for the abandonment of the rule announced in *Wittenberg v. Mollyneaux, supra*. Had the contract been carried out, as extended, plaintiff would have completed the delivery of the 50,000 yards of gravel by October 5, 1895, and the breach occurred, if there was a breach, not later than that date. Plaintiff's right to compensation in the way of damages accrued at that time, and the amount then required to compensate him for a loss sustained by the breach would have been, as we have seen, the difference between what it would have cost him to procure and deliver the balance of the gravel and the agreed price. Every day payment was deferred enhanced the damages to the extent of the value of the use of the money. The suit was begun in October, 1899, and was not finally tried until the March term, 1905, of the district court. In other words, at the time this case was finally submitted the money which would have been required to compensate the plaintiff when his cause of action arose had been withheld from him for almost ten years. The fundamental idea lying at the root of the whole doctrine of damages in this jurisdiction is compensation. Punishment of the wrongdoer has no place in the doctrine. The purpose of the law is to make the condition of the party aggrieved, as nearly as may be, what it would have been had the contract been performed. In other words, to see that the plaintiff suffers no loss in money or property by reason of the breach of his contract. It is no answer to the claim for interest, as part of the amount required to make good his loss, to say that the amount required to compensate him was unascertained and could only be ascertained by verdict, and, consequently, the defendant was unable to make a tender of the amount, because that very uncertainty is one of the consequences of

the defendant's own wrong, and, if loss must fall upon one or the other by reason of such uncertainty, it is but just that it should fall on the wrongdoer, rather than upon his victim. Neither does the statute stand in the way of the allowance of interest as damages in such cases. The interest is a part of the damages sustained, and it is wholly immaterial by what name the specific item of damages is designated. But whatever damages are allowed, and by whatever name they are called, they are allowed as compensation, and any scheme of compensation, whereby it is sought to place the plaintiff in as favorable a position as he would have occupied had the contract been performed, that does not take into account the value of the use of the money for the time it has been withheld subsequent to the accrual of the action is obviously defective and inadequate.

We do not wish to be understood as holding that interest is recoverable in all actions sounding in damages. It is not necessary to go to that length in this case. No doubt a distinction may be drawn between actions for damages for assault, libel, alienation of affections, breach of promise to marry, and the like, where the damages, of necessity, are more or less within the discretion of the jury, and those where they are mathematically computed from data furnished by the evidence. This case falls within the latter class, and we think the true measure of damages is the difference between what it would have cost the plaintiff to procure and furnish the gravel according to contract and the contract price, plus the interest on such difference from the accrual of the action. If we are correct thus far, then the case of *Wittenberg v. Mollyneaux, supra*, to the extent that it conflicts with the views here expressed, should be overruled. In that event, there is no error in the instruction of the trial court on the subject of interest of which the defendant may justly complain.

Other errors are assigned and discussed. Some of them relate to questions already considered, the others to such

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as are not likely to arise in their present form at another trial, so it would be unprofitable to extend this opinion to greater length.

For the errors pointed out, it is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

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WILLIAM LUTJEHARMS, APPELLEE, v. M. E. SMITH, APPELLANT.

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,227.

1. Principal and Agent: RATIFICATION OF CONTRACT: ESTOPPEL. A principal who ratifies a contract of his agent is thereafter, in the absence of fraud, estopped from denying the authority of the agent to enter into the contract.
2. Specific Performance. Where the vendee of real estate is willing to accept the title of the vendor, the courts will not refuse to compel a specific performance of a contract because of a defect in the title.

APPEAL from the district court for Harlan county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*J. G. Thompson and Flansbury & Williams*, for appellant.

*John Everson, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

The action is one to enforce the specific performance of a contract for the sale of real estate. On August 28, 1903,

O. H. Myers, a real estate agent at Alma, wrote the appellant as follows: "Mr. Smith, Burley, Wash. Dear Sir: I have a man who would like to buy your land in Mullally township if you will make the price right, so what is the very least cash net to you that you will take for the farm, and I will try to get my commission above your price. Make price right and I have a buyer. Give me your net price and I will get my commission above it. Also send me the legal numbers of your land. Please let me hear at once, direct from you. Respt., O. H. Myers."

Appellant answered: "Burley, Wash., Sept. 3, 1903. Mr. O. H. Myers, Alma, Neb. Yours of the 28 inst. received and contents noted: My price is \$2,500 for land in sections 26 & 27; E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  section 27 and N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 26. I also have 80 acres in section 25 for which I want \$600 N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$ . If farm is sold all together \$3,000 takes the entire 320 acres. I reserve right to sell at any time. Yours respectfully, M. E. Smith, Burley, Wash." Upon receipt of this communication Myers entered into an agreement with the appellee for the sale of the land. He received \$50 on the purchase price and gave the appellee the following memorandum: "Alma, Neb., Sept. 7, 1903. Received of Wm. Lutjeharms \$50 to bind contract of sale for the E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$ , E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of S. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 27 and N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 26, and S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of section 25, all in town 2 range 17, Harlan county, Nebr. Purchase price to be \$3,100, said \$50 paid to be applied on purchase price; and balance of purchase price to be paid as soon as good warranty deed and abstract is delivered, showing said land to be free of all incumbrance. Full possession of land to be given Mar. 1st, 1904. M. E. Smith, O. H. Myers, Agent. Subscribed and sworn to before me this 7th Sept., 1903. Mary A. Fennessy, Notary Public, Harlan County, Neb. (Seal.) My Commission expires August 27, 1907." He wrote the appellant this letter: "Alma, Neb., Sept. 7, 03. Mr. Smith, Burley, Wash. Dear Sir: I have today sold your land in Mullally township this county for \$3,100

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cash. \$50 has been paid and a contract of sale given and placed on record at the court house, the balance of the money will be paid as soon as you get your deeds and abstracts here. Make deed to William Lutjeharms, and send same to the Bank of Alma, at Alma, Neb., and the balance of your money will be ready. Send your abstracts to S. L. Roberts and have them brought down to date. Mr. Roberts is the best abstractor in Alma. Mr. Lutjeharms wants full possession on March first, 1904. This sale includes the 320 acres. Respt., O. H. Myers." The appellant answered as follows: "Burley, Wash., Sept. 14, '03. Mr. O. H. Myers, Alma, Nebr. Dear Sir: Your communication of the 7th inst. is rec'd and am well pleased with the result of your negotiations as well as your promptness in the matter. The patent for the 160 A. in sec. 27 is in the land office at McCook and I shall be obliged to send for it, or if it will suit you as well can send you the papers and let you get it. The 80 A. in sec. 25 was homesteaded by my mother and willed by her to my sister and myself as joint heirs. My sister will probably be here next Sat., Sept. 19, and we will then fix deed and send to Wis. for the necessary proof of our legal right to the land from my mother. Now as to an abstract, the land has never changed hands, my papers having come directly from the government, and I do not feel like standing the expense of securing an abstract. If Mr. Lutjeharms wishes to stand the expense all right, but I do not consider an abstract under these conditions necessary, as any one can with very little trouble refer to records and rec. all needful information. I will stand all expense incurred by having records brought up to date. Hoping this may prove satisfactory to you and thanking you for your trouble in the matter, I remain, Yours respectfully, M. E. Smith." Upon receipt of this communication Myers wrote and forwarded appellant the following letter: "Alma, Neb., Sept. 18, 1903. Mr. Smith, Burley, Wash. Dear Sir: In reply to yours of 14th will say: We will get patent from McCook, or if you have started to get the patent, go

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ahead and get it. It makes no difference to us, just so the sale is closed all right, soon as possible. Make deeds and send to Bank of Alma, with full instruction regarding closing of sale. Instruct bank to pay me \$100 commission, pay all necessary expense, such as you stated you would pay, taxes, if any are due, and get records to date. Mr. Lutejeharms will pay for abstract. Please let me hear at once. Respt., O. H. Myers." He answered as follows: "Burley, Wash., Sep. 22, 1903. Mr. O. H. Myers, Alma, Neb. Mr. Myers I received notice the same day that I rote you last (the 14 inst.) from F. P. Fox of Republican that he had sold same the land. Pleas see Mr. Fox and see if the matter can be straeightened without eny hard feelings in the neighborhood. Now if you will look at my first letter you will find that I stated that I would not hold the land for you so I am not to blame in the least. Yours truly, M. E. Smith. P. S. The reason I did not write you before was that I was in hopes that you would insist on my furnishing abstracts." Thereupon appellee instituted this action, of which appellant was informed by a communication from the agent Myers. Upon being informed of the commencement of the action, appellant wrote, on the back of agent's letter, this communication to Mr. F. P. Fox: "Burley, Wash., Oct. 14. Mr. F. P. Fox, Republican, Neb. Just received this now Leola wrote the letter and I signed it as I was eatin breakfast but in same letter stated that I would not furnish abstracts so it shows that I was not well pleased, and I do not consider the sale cloased but perhaps the courts would hold that I was bound as they excepted the conditions now that letter myne was dated the 14 the same as your & Hausermans was now unless we can show that the land was in your hands for sale and I had no right to sell without notifying you (that is close deal) perhaps they have us on their hip now do as you think best and I am with you. M. E. Smith." The trial resulted in a decree requiring the performance of the contract, and the case is here for review.

It is urged that the agent was not authorized to enter

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into a written contract for the sale of appellant's land. It seems unnecessary, however, to determine that question. The letters contain all the elements of a contract, which was in all respects ratified by appellant, with the single exception of that portion of it which required him to furnish an abstract of title. He said, however, in that regard: "I do not feel like standing the expense of securing an abstract. If Mr. Lutjeharms wishes to stand the expense all right." The only reasonable deduction to be drawn from his letter of September 14, 1903, is that he would carry out the terms of the agreement made by his agent, except the item of expense for an abstract. This was expressly waived in the next letter to him; in other words, the conditions of sale proposed by him were accepted. His subsequent communication to Myers discloses that he considered his obligation to convey the land complete, provided the abstract was not insisted upon. His letter to Fox discloses that he treated his conditions of sale as having been accepted and that he was bound thereby, unless a possible defense suggested by him could be interposed. The appellee tendered in court \$3,050, the remainder agreed upon as the purchase price. The conclusion is irresistible that there was an unqualified acceptance of the terms of sale proposed by the appellant himself, and that he is bound thereby. It is urged, however, that it appears from one of appellant's letters that he does not own a portion of the land. The rule, however, is that where the vendee is willing to accept the vendor's title, the vendor cannot set up as a defense to the action a defect in his title. *Gartrell v. Stafford*, 12 Neb. 546.

The judgment of the district court was right, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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Middlekauff v. Adams.

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**OSCAR MIDDLEKAUFF, APPELLANT, v. FRANK ADAMS ET AL.,  
APPELLEES.**

FILED MARCH 22, 1906. No. 14,553.

Evidence examined, and held to sustain the conclusions of the trial court.

APPEAL from the district court for Dawson county:  
**BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*H. D. Rhea and Oscar Middlekauff*, for appellant.

*John A. Sheean, W. A. Stewart and E. C. Calkins,*  
*contra.*

**JACKSON, C.**

This is an appeal from the judgment of the trial court denying a writ of mandamus to compel the city council of the city of Lexington to revoke a liquor license, and to fix a time for hearing a remonstrance against the issuing of the license. There is some conflict in the evidence, but it may reasonably be said that the following facts are established by the record: The relator is an attorney at law residing in the city of Lexington. He was employed by one saloon-keeper to prosecute remonstrance proceedings against the granting of a license to W. J. Horrigan, another saloon-keeper. He prepared and filed with the city clerk on April 29, 1905, a remonstrance, stating facts sufficient to prevent the issuing of a license. The remonstrance was signed: "David Cole, Remonstrator. Oscar Middlekauff." On May 1 following two additional remonstrances were filed, one signed: "David Cole, Remonstrator," and the other "David Cole, Remonstrator, by Oscar Middlekauff." At 4 o'clock P. M. of that day, at a meeting of the city council, the time for hearing the several remonstrances was set for 7 o'clock P. M. on the following day, and the council adjourned until 7 o'clock P. M.

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of May 1, by agreement, to consider the matter of the qualifications of certain signers of the petition of the applicant, that being one of the grounds upon which the remonstrance was based. When the council convened on the evening of May 1, the parties all agreed that the petition contained a sufficient number of freeholders, and the record shows the following, among other proceedings: "David Cole, remonstrator, against the petition of W. J. Horrigan filed a written withdrawal of all objections against issuing of the license to W. J. Horrigan. Remonstrators against the granting of license having withdrawn their remonstrances, it is moved by Neilson, and seconded by McElhiney (members of the council), that saloon license be granted to W. J. Horrigan." On this motion all the members of the council voted aye, and the clerk was ordered to issue the license.

The relator was present in the council chamber when these proceedings were had, and made no objection or protest, and the council adjourned. After adjournment the relator complained that the proceeding was illegal, and on the following day filed a new remonstrance, with a præcipe demanding subpœnas for witnesses, and that the council take action on his remonstrance. This request was refused, and the refusal resulted in the petition for mandamus. He now insists that he was one of the original remonstrators, and that his remonstrance was never withdrawn, and that the action of the council taken at the evening meeting on May 1 was illegal. There are two answers to this contention: First, that he was present when the resolution was adopted showing the withdrawal of all remonstrances, and permitted the council to act on the assumption that they were withdrawn, and made no objection to such course; second, the council proceeded upon the theory that he was an attorney for the remonstrator, and that he appeared in that capacity only. He was advised prior to the evening meeting that the remonstrator Cole had signed a written withdrawal of all remonstrances interposed by him against the issuing of the

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In re Butler.

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license, and might, had he desired to do so, have prepared and filed a remonstrance on his own behalf. This he failed to do, and while final action was taken by the council in advance of the time fixed for hearing the remonstrances, yet when they did act they were lawfully assembled, clothed with power to issue licenses, and all remonstrances having been withdrawn there was no occasion for further delay, and so far as the record discloses the action of the council was taken in the utmost good faith. The trial court found all the issues in favor of the respondents, and the finding had ample support in the evidence.

We conclude that the judgment of the district court was right, and recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**IN RE E. A. BUTLER ET AL.**

**FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,598.**

- 1. Depositions: Notaries: Powers.** In the taking of depositions notaries public are not exercising judicial functions, and do not constitute a law court. Their powers are derived solely from the statute. *Courtinay v. Knox*, 31 Neb. 652.
- 2. Notaries: Contempt: Penalty.** When a witness fails to attend before a notary public in obedience to a subpoena issued by that officer, he may be punished as for a contempt; but such punishment cannot exceed a fine of \$50, and the notary is not authorized by statute to commit the witness to the county jail therefor.

**ORIGINAL application for a writ of habeas corpus. Writ allowed.**

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In re Butler.

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**H. M. Sullivan and Mockett & Mattley, for petitioners.**

**R. A. Moore, contra.**

**BARNES, J.**

This is an original application for a writ of habeas corpus. The petitioners were arrested on a complaint made before one J. R. Rhodes, a notary public in and for Custer county, Nebraska, charging them with having failed and refused to obey a subpoena issued by said officer in the matter of taking certain depositions. They were found guilty by the notary, and were committed to the common jail of Custer county. To regain their liberty they prosecute this proceeding.

It appears from the return of the respondent that on the 12th day of December, 1904, R. A. Moore and James Ledwich, as plaintiffs, gave the petitioners, as defendants, notice that they would take their depositions, in an action alleged to be pending in the district court for Custer county, at the hour of 10 o'clock A. M., on the 14th day of December, 1904, before one J. R. Rhodes, a notary public, at his office in the village of Ansley, in said county. It also appears that a subpoena corresponding to said notice was issued by the notary and served on the petitioners. It further appears that on the 13th day of December, 1904, a notice to take the depositions of the same persons, in the same case, before the same officer, on the 16th day of December, 1904, was served on one H. M. Sullivan, the attorney for the petitioners; that said fact was communicated to them by their attorney, and for that reason they failed to appear before the notary on the 14th day of December according to the subpoena above mentioned. Afterwards, on the said 14th day of December, and after the time mentioned in the first notice and subpoena had expired, R. A. Moore appeared before the notary and made the following complaint (omitting the title): "State of Nebraska, Custer County, ss.: I, R. A.

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In re Butler.

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Moore, on oath depose and say that I am one of the plaintiffs mentioned in the above suit; that on the 12th day of December, 1904, I caused a notice to be issued and served on the defendants that plaintiff would take the depositions of E. A. Butler, William Mattley and Arthur Barks, before J. R. Rhodes, a notary public of Ansley, Custer county, Nebraska, on the 14th day of December, 1904, at the hour of 10 o'clock A. M., and that said witnesses were personally served with a subpoena signed by said notary; that the return to the notice and subpoena is hereby made a part of this showing; that said witnesses have failed, and wilfully and knowingly refused to appear before said notary and submit to an examination, and affiant asks that the said notary issue an attachment for said witnesses, and that they be arrested, and brought before said notary, and be fined for said contempt; that by disobeying said subpoena said witnesses are in contempt of court, and he asks that they be compelled to appear and submit to an examination, as by law provided." Signed and sworn to by R. A. Moore. After filing the complaint above quoted, the notary issued a warrant for the arrest of the petitioners, which warrant was in the words and figures following: "State of Nebraska, Custer county, ss.: To the Sheriff or any Constable of said County: You are hereby commanded to arrest forthwith E. A. Butler, William Mattley and Arthur Barks, and bring them before me, J. R. Rhodes, a notary public in and for the village of Ansley, county of Custer, and state of Nebraska, to show cause why they should not be punished for contempt for disobeying the order of said notary public in subpoenaing said witnesses to appear before him to take their depositions to be used in a cause pending in the district court for Custer county, Nebraska, wherein R. A. Moore and James Ledwich are plaintiffs and Nettie Barks and Arthur Barks and E. A. Butler & Co. et al. are defendants, on the 14th day of December, 1904, at 10 o'clock A. M., such behavior tending to interrupt the due course of the trial of said cause. Given under my hand and official

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In re Butler.

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seal this 14th day of December, 1904. J. R. Rhodes, Notary Public. (Seal.)"

The petitioners were thereupon arrested, and brought before the notary. The hearing of said contempt proceeding was continued from time to time, until the 19th day of December, 1904, when the cause was tried, and the petitioners were adjudged to be in contempt, and were committed to the common jail of Custer county. The foregoing are the facts established by the petition, the return of the sheriff of Custer county, the respondent herein, together with the testimony taken on the hearing before us.

The petitioners now contend, among other things, that the judgment or order of the notary, and the warrant of commitment thereon, by which they are restrained of their liberty, are void, because the notary was without jurisdiction to make such order of commitment. We think this contention is well founded. The rule is fundamental that in taking depositions notaries public are not exercising judicial functions, and do not constitute a law court. Their powers are solely derived from the statute. *Courtney v. Knox*, 31 Neb. 652. Keeping in mind this rule, we find from an examination of the statutes that section 356 of the code provides: "Disobedience of a subpoena, or a refusal to be sworn, or to answer as a witness, or to subscribe a deposition, when lawfully ordered, may be punished as a contempt of the court or officer by whom his attendance or testimony is required." It is further provided by section 358 of the code: "The punishment for the contempt mentioned in section 356 shall be as follows: When the witness fails to attend in obedience to the subpoena (except in case of a demand and failure to pay his fees), the court or officer may fine the witness in a sum not exceeding \$50. In other cases, the court or officer may fine the witness in a sum not exceeding \$50 nor less than \$5 or may imprison him in the county jail, there to remain until he shall submit to be sworn, to testify, or give his deposition." It will be observed that the complaint on which the petitioners were arrested and brought

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In re Butler.

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before the notary charged them with failing and refusing to obey the subpoena above mentioned. This is the only charge contained in the complaint, and is the one described in the warrant. It seems clear that for that offense the officer could impose no greater punishment than a fine of \$50 and that he had no power or authority to commit the petitioners to the county jail therefor. In *Ex parte Mallinkrodt*, 20 Mo. 493, where the petitioner was committed to jail by a notary public for contempt in not producing certain books and papers in answer to a *subpœna duces tecum*, issued by the notary, to give testimony in an action pending in the circuit court of St. Louis, it was held:

"The power of notaries, in taking depositions, is strictly statutory. They can do nothing not expressly authorized and under the circumstances which authorize it. There is no power given to an officer taking depositions to commit a witness for refusing to produce books."

The only power given the notary by our statutes in case of a refusal of the witness to obey a subpoena is to fine him not to exceed the sum of \$50. It follows that the order of the court based on the complaint and warrant set forth in the respondent's return was without authority of law and is void.

It is contended for the respondent that the order of the notary and warrant of commitment show that the petitioners were found guilty of the offense of refusing to testify, and therefore the order was valid. The record itself is a sufficient answer to this contention. It is not shown that the petitioners were directed or ordered to be sworn. It is not shown that they refused to be sworn or give their testimony. The record does not show that a single question of any kind, seeking to elicit their testimony, was propounded to them. In fact the only question before the notary at the time his order of commitment was made was whether or not the petitioners were in contempt for refusing to obey the subpoena. As was said in *Crites v. State*, 74 Neb. 687, a proceeding to punish for con-

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tempt is criminal in its nature, and the rules governing criminal proceedings are applicable thereto. It is essential to the validity of contempt proceedings that they show a case in point of jurisdiction within the provisions of the law by which such proceedings are authorized, for mere presumptions and intendments are not to be indulged in their support; that the record must show forth the facts constituting the offense. That the record in this case fails to comply with these well known requirements, and is not sufficient to sustain the order of commitment, there can be no question. The petitioners being unlawfully restrained of their liberty must be discharged from custody, and it is so ordered.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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STATE, EX REL. CITY OF RED CLOUD, RELATOR, v. EDWARD M. SEARLE, JR., AUDITOR, RESPONDENT.

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,643.

1. Cities: LIGHTING SYSTEM: BONDS. Cities of the second class and villages in this state have the option to vote bonds to the amount of 5 per cent. of the assessed valuation of their taxable property to establish a heating or lighting system, under the provisions of sections 1-5, art. V, ch. 14a, Comp. St. 1903, or limit the amount of such bonds to 2½ per cent. of such valuation by proceeding under chapter 33, laws 1905.
2. ——: BONDS: REGISTRATION. Bonds, designated electric light bonds, to the amount of 5 per cent. of such assessed valuation, which the record fairly shows were voted and issued under the provisions of the act of 1903, held valid and entitled to registration.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondent to register certain bonds. *Writ allowed.*

*L. H. Blackledge*, for relator.

*Norris Brown, Attorney General*, and *W. T. Thompson*, contra.

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BARNES, J.

This is an original application for a writ of mandamus to compel the auditor of public accounts to register a series of electric light bonds voted by the city of Red Cloud, a city of the second class, having less than 5,000 inhabitants. It appears from the petition of the relator that on the 9th day of January, 1906, the city of Red Cloud voted bonds to the amount of \$10,000 (which is 5 per cent. of the value of its taxable property) to "construct and establish a system of electric lights in and for said city"; and on the 12th day of March, 1906, presented said bonds, together with their history, to the respondent for registration and certification, as provided by law; that the auditor refused to register them, for the following reason: "This department cannot register electric lighting bonds of your city presented for registration by Mr. L. H. Fort, for the reason that you have voted them under the wrong statute. The statute providing for the voting of electric lighting bonds says: 'That but two and one-half per cent. of the assessed valuation can be voted.'" And thereupon this application was made.

To the relator's petition the respondent has filed a general demurrer, which raises the question as to whether the relator has power, under the statutes now in force, to vote electric light bonds to the amount of 5 per cent. of the taxable value of its property, as shown by the last previous annual assessment thereof. It appears that the legislature, at its session of 1889, passed an act authorizing any city of the second class to establish, maintain, operate and control a system of electric lights, and to vote bonds for that purpose. The act by its terms limited the amount of such bonds to 2½ per cent. of the taxable value of the property of such city, as shown by the last previous annual assessment. Laws 1889, ch. 19. In the year 1901 the legislature passed an act authorizing cities of the first and second class to establish and maintain a heating or lighting system; to vote bonds for that purpose, limiting the

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bonds so voted to an amount not exceeding 5 per cent of the taxable value of the property of such city. Laws 1901, ch. 22. That act did not purport to amend or repeal the law of 1889, but was a separate and independent act. In the year 1903 the legislature amended the last-mentioned act so as to make it apply to villages as well as to cities of the first and second class. Comp. St. 1903, ch. 14a, art. V, secs. 1-5.

It is apparent that the legislature did not intend, by the act last above mentioned, and the amendment thereto, to repeal the act of 1889, authorizing the construction and establishment of electric light systems, because at its session of 1905, it passed an act amending the law of 1889 (Comp. St. 1905, ch. 14, art. I), as follows:

Sec. 124. "Any city of the second class in this state and any village shall have the power and is hereby authorized to establish and maintain a system of electric lights for such city or village; and the city council of such city or the board of trustees of such village shall have the power to levy a tax not exceeding five mills on the dollar in any one year for the purpose of establishing, extending, and maintaining such system of electric lights."

Sec. 125. "Where the amount of money which would be raised by the levy provided for in section 124 would be insufficient to establish a system of electric lights as contemplated herein in any city or village in this state, such city or village may issue its bonds bearing not to exceed five per cent. interest and maturing in twenty years, but payable at any time after the expiration of ten years, at the option of the city or village, for the purpose of raising a sum sufficient to establish such electric light system; provided that the aggregate of bonds issued for such purpose shall not exceed two and one-half per cent. of the taxable value of the property of such city or village as shown by the last previous annual assessment."

It will be seen by a comparison of these acts, that they are unlike in several particulars. One provides for establishing and maintaining a heating or lighting system, and

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authorizes cities of the first and second class and villages to vote bonds therefor to the amount of 5 per cent. of their assessed valuation; provides, that such bonds may bear 6 per cent. interest, and shall run for 20 years, but shall be payable at the option of the municipality at any time after 5 years; while the other only authorizes cities of the second class and villages to vote electric light bonds, expressly limits the amount of such bonds to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the taxable value of the property of such city or village, provides that such bonds shall not bear more than 5 per cent. interest, and makes them payable in 20 years, with an option to the municipality to pay them at any time after 10 years. Again, one provides specifically how contracts for the construction of the system mentioned therein shall be let; while the other makes no such provision. It is thus apparent that the legislature in passing each of these acts recognized the existence of the other, and there can be no doubt that the legislative intention was that the provisions of both acts should be enforced. It may seem that the point raised by the respondent is extremely technical, yet we must give it our careful consideration.

By a rule of statutory construction it is made our duty to hold each of the acts in question valid, and give to each of them all the force and effect possible. Under this rule it seems clear that cities of the second class and villages have an option, to vote bonds to the amount of 5 per cent. of their assessed valuation to establish a heating or lighting system, under the provisions of section 1-5, art. V, ch. 14a, Comp. St. 1903, or bonds to the amount of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of such valuation to construct and establish an electric light system, under the provisions of the act of 1905 above mentioned. So it only remains for us to ascertain from the record which act the bonds in question were voted and issued under. The history of the bonds shows that the proclamation and notice of the election stated at the outset that the amount of the bonds should be 5 per cent. of the assessed taxable property of the city, and that the vote should be taken and the bonds issued under the provisions

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of sections 1-5 above referred to; that the proposition contained in the proclamation and notice of election was duly adopted by the electors of the city; that the bonds were made payable in 20 years with an option to pay them at any time after 5 years as provided by the act of 1903, and state upon their face that they are voted and issued under the provisions of that act. It may therefore be said that the record fairly shows that the bonds were voted and issued under the act of 1903, and not under the act of 1905. So we are of the opinion that the bonds were properly voted and issued under the act authorizing the city to vote bonds to the amount of 5 per cent.; that the objection of the respondent was not well taken, and that the relator is entitled to the relief prayed for. For the foregoing reasons, the peremptory writ of mandamus is hereby allowed.

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**WRIT ALLOWED.**

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**SYLVESTER H. KNEELAND v. WILLIAM W. WEIGLEY.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,095.

1. Attachment: Objection to jurisdiction. Where the only ground alleged for the issuance of an attachment is that the defendant is a nonresident, he is not entitled to make a special appearance or to answer, attacking the jurisdiction of the court upon the sole ground that he is not the owner of the property seized under the writ.

2. *Weich v. Ayres*, 43 Neb. 326, modified.

ERROR to the district court for Clay county: LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*L. B. Stiner and Tibbets Bros. & Morey*, for plaintiff in error.

*Epperson & Sons and S. W. Christy, contra.*

LETTON, J.

This was an action brought to recover upon a judgment rendered in the state of New York. Certain real estate in

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Clay county was attached under an order of attachment issued upon an affidavit the ground of which was that the defendant is a nonresident of the state. The defendant made a special appearance objecting to the jurisdiction of the court, which was overruled. An answer was thereafter filed by the defendant, the first defense therein setting forth in substance the same matters and objections to jurisdiction which were set forth in the special appearance. These allegations are in substance as follows: That the plaintiff is a resident of the state of New York and had never been a resident of Nebraska; that the only service is by publication upon the alleged levy of an attachment upon certain real estate in Clay county made on May 19, 1903; that the defendant at said time had neither title nor ownership, legal or equitable, to said premises or any portion thereof, nor the possession of any part thereof, nor any right, title, claim or interest of any kind in or to said premises; that the defendant did not have on May 19, 1903, or at any time since, any property or debts owing to him in the state of Nebraska; that upwards of 20 years ago he purchased said real estate and in 1876 sold the same to his brother, James P. Kneeland, and Alice Kneeland, his wife, retaining the naked legal title for the purpose of securing the purchase price; that in 1877 James P. Kneeland and family entered upon the possession of the premises as the owners thereof and have ever since occupied the same as such owners; that in 1895 he received full payment of the balance of the purchase price, but that he retained the naked legal title until December 15, 1902, when he executed deeds to the premises to his brother and his wife, which were recorded on March 9, 1903, and that he has had no interest in the land since 1876, except a lien for the purchase price as before set forth, and that on May 19, 1903, defendant was absolutely without any right, title, claim, lien or interest, of any name, nature or description, in or to the premises; that by reason thereof this court has acquired no jurisdiction over his person or the subject matter of the action. The second defense was a general

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denial. A general demurrer was filed to the first defense, which was sustained by the court, to which the defendant duly excepted. Afterwards the cause was heard upon the pleadings and the evidence, judgment rendered for the plaintiff and the attached property ordered sold. From which judgment and order the defendant has brought these error proceedings.

The only assignment of error which it is necessary to consider is that the district court erred in sustaining the demurrer to the first defense set forth in the answer. Under the provision of the third subdivision of section 77 of the code, jurisdiction of a defendant in an action for the recovery of money cannot be acquired by service by publication unless the defendant is a nonresident of the state, having property in this state, or debts owing to him, which are sought to be taken by some provisional remedy or to be appropriated by judicial proceedings.

The plaintiff in error contends that the facts set forth in the first defense show conclusively that the court never acquired any jurisdiction, and that hence his special appearance should have been sustained and the demurrer overruled. The principles governing jurisdiction in cases of this kind are lucidly set forth by Justice Miller in *Cooper v. Reynolds*, 10 Wall. (U. S.) 308. It is shown in the opinion that by jurisdiction over the subject matter is meant the nature of the cause of action and of the relief sought, that jurisdiction of the person is obtained by the service of process or by the voluntary appearance of the party in the case, and that jurisdiction of the *res* is obtained by a seizure, under process of the court, whereby it is held subject to such order as the court may make in the cause. In *Darnell v. Mack*, 46 Neb. 740, in a clear and convincing opinion by IRVINE, Commissioner, the former decisions of this state are reviewed and the principles laid down in *Cooper v. Reynolds*, *supra*, approved and adopted. The doctrine laid down in *Darnell v. Mack*, *supra*, though often assailed, has become the settled law of this state, and we believe it to be sound.

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Plaintiff in error argues, upon the authority of *Welch v. Ayres*, 43 Neb. 326, that, where the defendant asserts that he has no property within the state, it is competent for the court to hear testimony upon this question for the purpose of determining whether or not it ever acquired jurisdiction. It will be observed that the statement of this proposition in *Welch v. Ayres, supra*, was not necessary to a decision of the case. In that case the court held that, since the defendant had filed a motion to dismiss the suit, he had made a general appearance in the action, and that this was a waiver of defects in the service by publication and gave the court jurisdiction of the person of the defendant, so that the proposition relied upon in this case was *obiter dictum*. Judge NORVAL cites as authority for his position the case of *National Bank of New London v. Lake Shore & M. S. R. Co.*, 21 Ohio St. 221. In that case the action was brought against certain nonresidents of the state of Ohio and a notice of garnishment was served upon a railway company. The railway company answered as garnishee, denying that it held any railway stock, property or credits of the defendant in its possession or under its control, and alleged that at a previous date the defendant had transferred all his stock in said company to another person and had held none since that date. Judgment by default was rendered against the defendant and an order made for the sale of 40 shares of stock of said railway company as property attached belonging to the defendant. Afterwards, under an order of court, the sheriff sold to the plaintiff the 40 shares referred to, and this action was brought against the railway company to recover the value of said 40 shares, claiming that at the time of the garnishment the defendant was the owner of the stock, that the transfer made by him was without consideration and made with intent to defraud the plaintiff, and that by virtue of the proceedings and sale the stock became the property of the plaintiff, and that the defendant wrongfully refused to transfer and deliver the same to the plaintiff when requested so to do. The defendant denied

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the jurisdiction of the court, that the attachment defendant was the owner of the stock, that he had fraudulently transferred the same and that any interest had passed to the plaintiff by the sale under the attachment. Trial was had and a judgment rendered for the plaintiff for the value of the stock. This judgment was reversed for the reason that the plaintiff was not entitled to the relief sought in an action of that form. Upon the question as to jurisdiction the court say:

"The question under consideration being as to the jurisdiction of the court, and not as to the regularity of its proceedings, it is important, it appears to me, to keep distinctly in mind the fact that this action was *in personam* —an action for the recovery of money, and not a proceeding *in rem* merely. \* \* \* In the attachment proceeding against Butler, it was claimed by the plaintiff that he was the owner of the stock and that claim was verified by affidavit. The garnishee in his answer denied that the defendant owned any stock to its knowledge. Afterwards, upon the trial of the cause, the court heard testimony and found that he was the owner although it stood in the name of his wife. The record does not disclose the testimony that was offered, but we are of opinion that it was competent for the court to inquire into this jurisdictional fact, and having found it in favor of the jurisdiction, the subsequent judgment and order were not void."

This case was decided before the principles which govern actions affecting the property of nonresidents sought to be reached by attachment proceedings had been announced in *Pennoyer v. Neff*, 5 Otto (U. S.), 714, now recognized as the leading case upon the subject. It seems to us that the Ohio court was in error when it said that the action was one *in personam*. It was in form an action *in personam*, but, unless the defendant was summoned within the state, or personally appeared, it was an action *quasi in rem*, and a judgment would be of absolutely no force or validity as affecting the person. Further, the reasoning of the court is based upon the assumption that jurisdiction of

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the *res* was not obtained by the seizure, but by the publication, which is contrary to the doctrine of *Darnell v. Mack, supra*.

Since, if the defendant does not own the property which has been attached, he can suffer no possible injury by the attachment proceedings, it is very generally held that an attachment defendant is not entitled to have the attachment quashed for the sole reason that he is not the owner of the property seized. See cases cited in note to 4 Cyc. p. 775. In *McCord, Brady & Co. v. Bowen*, 51 Neb. 247, it is pointed out that, while a defendant in attachment may deny the truth of the facts set forth as the grounds for attachment, such as that he has fraudulently conveyed his property, it is not competent for him to move the discharge of an attachment upon the ground alone that the property attached does not belong to him. Whatever the grounds set forth in the affidavit for attachment may be, the defendant has a right to deny their existence and to have that issue tried, regardless of whether or not he owns the property attached, but, where the grounds for the attachment are not denied, the fact that the defendant does not own the property which may have been seized under the writ is not a good ground for him to move for a dissolution of the attachment, for the reason that if the property is not his he has no interest in its seizure or discharge. The same reason applies with equal force against the propriety of permitting a nonresident defendant to attack the jurisdiction of the court over the *res* upon the ground that it belongs to someone else. If it is not his he cannot suffer any loss or damage by the levy of the attachment. The whole proceeding would be absolutely void, both as to jurisdiction over the property and over his person. If the action proceeds to judgment and order of sale of the attached property, and the defendant has in fact no interest in the real estate seized, he is not concerned. We are not unaware that in *Harris v. Taylor*, 35 Tenn. 536, and *Schlater v. Broaddus*, 7 Martin (La.), 527, the contrary view was taken, but we think ours is upon better

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reason. We have held that, where an attachment is issued and levy made upon real estate belonging to the debtor, whether held in his own name or not, the creditor acquires a lien upon the interest of the debtor in the land, which he may enforce after the recovery of the judgment, and the fact that the party holding the legal title to the land is a nonresident of the state is immaterial, since in such case service may be had by publication. *Keene v. Sallenbach*, 15 Neb. 200. The question of title should be tried in a case in which the facilities afforded for the ascertainment of truth by the examination and cross-examination of witnesses may be had, and not upon affidavits, as might be done if we consented to the doctrine of the plaintiff in error and held that it might be tried upon objections to jurisdiction made by special appearance.

The doctrine of *Welch v. Ayers, supra*, is modified in accordance with these views. The special appearance was properly overruled and the demurrer sustained. The judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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EMMA PETERSEN, APPELLEE, v. SOREN T. PETERSEN, APPELLEE, AND J. A. C. KENNEDY, APPELLANT.

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,168.

**Divorce: DISMISSAL: INTERVENTION.** When, in an action by a wife for a divorce, the parties become reconciled and resume marital relations before issue joined, it is not error for the court to dismiss the suit at the instance of the plaintiff, and such a dismissal carries with it a pending application for temporary alimony, which the plaintiff's attorney is not entitled to revive, by means of intervention, and prosecute for his own benefit.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
WILLIS G. SEARS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*T. J. Mahoney and J. A. C. Kennedy, for appellant.*

*J. O. Detweiler, contra.*

**AMES, C.**

May 31, 1904, Emma Petersen begun an action in the district court for Douglas county against Soren T. Petersen with whom, she alleged in her petition, she had lived for more than ten years then last past as his wife, and by whom during that time she had been recognized as such publicly and in such manner as to establish a lawful marriage between him and herself, but alleging that he had been guilty of certain breaches of duty toward her in that relation on account of which she was entitled to a decree of divorce and alimony, for which she prayed. The petition also contained a prayer for temporary alimony to enable the plaintiff to maintain and carry on her action. On the next day the defendant was served with a copy of the petition together with a notice that the application for temporary alimony would be urged upon the attention of the court three days later, viz., on June 4. On the latter date the hearing of the application was, at the request of the defendant, postponed until June 10. On the 6th of June the parties met and effected a reconciliation, which was ratified on the same day by a formal celebration of their marriage in conformity with the statute. What their relations had been before that time does not appear, otherwise than by the allegations of the petition in response to which no pleading was ever filed, but on the 18th of the month the plaintiff filed in the court a formal written application to dismiss the action at her own costs, which motion the court on the same day denied, because of the pendency of a petition by J. A. C. Kennedy, attorney for the plaintiff, for leave to intervene and prosecute a claim against the husband for an allowance of a sum of money, as for alimony, to compensate him for his services in the beginning and prosecution of the suit. To this application the defendant filed a general demurrer, which was afterwards sustained, and the petition for an intervention was dismissed, as was also the action, at the renewed request of the plaintiff. The intervenor Kennedy prosecutes error.

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The proceeding by the plaintiff in error differs in no essential particular from a suit at law prosecuted by him against the husband to recover as upon a *quantum meruit* for services rendered to the wife in the divorce suit. No order for alimony has ever been made, and no fund has ever been paid into court or in any way raised or created upon which he can pretend to have acquired any lien. Whether such a fund ever would have been created even if the action had proceeded, rested wholly in the discretion of the trial court. Her application for temporary alimony created no right, and even if an allowance therefor had been granted, the money would have been awarded, not to her attorney, nor necessarily for attorney's fees alone, and the amount of the latter would have been the subject of a contract expressed or implied between her attorney and herself. The husband would have incurred no obligation to his wife's attorney, but in the discretion of the court might have been compelled to contribute to the relief of her necessities.

Intervener cites no authority in support of his claim, but several are cited in opposition thereto, among which are: *McCulloch v. Murphy*, 45 Ill. 256; *Thompson v. Thompson*, 3 Head (Tenn.), 527; *Carden v. Carden*, 37 S. W. (Tenn. Ch. App.) 1,022; *Anderson v. Steger*, 173 Ill. 112, 50 N. E. 665. The case of *Aspinwall v. Sabin*, 22 Neb. 73, cited by plaintiff in error, goes, we think, to the very extreme in this direction, but still falls short of reaching the end he seeks to attain. In that case an award of alimony specifically as fees to the plaintiff's attorneys had in fact been made apparently for services already rendered. That is to say, the court had adjudged the right of counsel to compensation and the amount of it against both the plaintiff and the defendant, and the subsequent reconciliation of the parties and their dismissal of the action did not have the effect to satisfy or annul that judgment. In *Waters v. Waters*, 49 Mo. 385, cited by plaintiff in error, the husband was plaintiff in a divorce suit which he had prosecuted so far as to compel his wife to obtain

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the services of counsel for the preparation of her defense. He was, therefore, himself at least morally responsible for the creation of the obligation which he was called upon to discharge, and a claim for which was pending when he dismissed his suit. It is not unlikely that he was liable at law and independently of the divorce statute as for a necessity furnished to his wife at his instance, but, in any view, the case is so different from the one at bar as not to be in point. The same considerations apply to *Powell v. Lilly*, 68 S. W. (Ky.) 123, and other cases from the same state, also cited by plaintiff in error. In this case the wife was plaintiff, and, in the absence of proof, there is no presumption that the defendant, if he were her husband, had been guilty of such *quasi* criminal conduct as justified an application to the court for a dissolution of the marriage tie. Proof thereof, if any existed, did not rest in the breast of the plaintiff in error, and was not supplied by the unsupported allegations of the petition and application, but could have been elicited, if at all, only by such an investigation into the marital and domestic history of the plaintiff and defendant as, after reconciliation and the resumption of the marital relations, would have been plainly and offensively repugnant to public policy.

We are of opinion therefore that the court did not err in sustaining the demurrer and dismissing the intervention, and recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

**OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.**

**By the Court:** For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

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Lancaster County v. Brown.

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**LANCASTER COUNTY ET AL. V. JENNIE E. BROWN.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,174.

**Taxation: APPEAL: EVIDENCE.** On an appeal by a property owner from a county board of equalization to the district court, on the sole ground that his property has been valued for taxation at a sum in excess of its real value, the sole question to be tried is, "What was the actual value of the property in the market in the ordinary course of trade?" This question is to be tried, in such a proceeding, in the same manner in which similar issues are tried in ordinary adversary actions between private persons, and evidence tending to show at what sums other similar property in the neighborhood had been valued for taxation, in the same year, by the assessor and his assistants and by the county board of equalization is incompetent and immaterial.

**ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*J. L. Caldwell, Charles E. Matson and F. M. Tyrrell,* for plaintiffs in error.

*E. E. Brown and Ricketts & Ricketts, contra.*

**AMES, C.**

Jennie E. Brown was, in the year 1904, the owner of certain dwelling house property situate in the city of Lincoln, which the county assessor and his deputy valued and returned for taxation at the sum of \$31,850. She made complaint to the county board sitting as a board of equalization that the property did not exceed \$20,000 in value and asked to have the valuation reduced to that sum. The county board took the matter into consideration and after hearing testimony reduced the amount to \$25,000. From an order of the board fixing the valuation at the last named sum an appeal was taken to the district court where pleadings were filed as in cases of appeals in ordinary adversary cases. The sole issue upon such pleading was raised by a denial in the answer of the following allegation

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in the petition: "The complainant alleges that the valuation of said premises as returned by the assessor and as reduced by the board of equalization for the purposes of taxation for the year 1904 is largely in excess of the actual value of said property as defined by the statute. That the value of said property in the market in the ordinary course of trade does not exceed the sum of \$20,000." As the result of a trial the court sustained the contention of the plaintiff and adjudged the value of the property to be \$20,000.

The county prosecutes error in this court upon two contentions: First, that the judgment is not supported by the evidence; and, second, that the court erred in excluding evidence tending to show at what sums other similar property in the neighborhood had been valued for taxation in the same year by the assessor and his assistants and by the county board of equalization. The latter contention cannot, in our opinion, be maintained. The statutes under which the proceeding is had, and having a bearing upon the questions involved in the controversy, are the following sections from the revenue act of 1903. (Comp. St. 1903, ch. 77, art. I.)

Section 12. "All property in this state not expressly exempt therefrom shall be subject to taxation, and shall be valued at its actual value which shall be entered opposite each item and shall be assessed at twenty per cent of such actual value. \* \* \* Actual value as used in this act shall mean its value in the market in the ordinary course of trade."

Section 124. "Appeals may be taken from any action of the county board of equalization to the district court within twenty days after its adjournment, in the same manner as appeals are now taken from the action of the county board in allowance or disallowance of claims against the county. \* \* \* The court shall hear the appeal as in equity without a jury, and determine anew all questions raised before the board which relate to the liability of the property to assessment, or the amount thereof,

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and any decision rendered therein shall be certified by the clerk of the court to the county clerk, who shall correct the assessment books in his office accordingly."

We find nothing in these enactments indicating a legislative intent that upon the trial of an issue like that presented in this case the district court shall make use of the functions of a board of equalization, and, except to aid in the exercise of such functions, the evidence offered could have been of no advantage. It was not evidence of the value of the property in question nor even of the value of the property to which it directly referred, but, at most, of the opinion as to the value of the latter mentioned property of persons who were not produced as witnesses in court or otherwise subjected to examination or cross-examination; and about whose competency or credit the court could officially, at least, know nothing. The sole issue raised by the pleadings was the question, "What was the actual value of the property in the market in the ordinary course of trade?" We can discover no ambiguity in the pleadings. The inquiry is very narrow and one with which the courts are accustomed to deal, and without doubt it should be tried and determined in all respects in the same manner in which similar questions are treated in ordinary actions between private litigants. Under the issues in this case the court has nothing to do with theories of taxation or questions of proportional valuation or methods of equalization. *Grimes v. City of Burlington*, 74 Ia. 123, 37 N. W. 106; *Lyons v. Board of Equalization*, 102 Ia. 1.

As respects the sufficiency of the evidence, seven competent witnesses were sworn, none of whom estimated the property at more than \$20,000 in market value. No attempt was made to refute them, except by cross-examination as to the separate value of the buildings and conjectural values of the lots considered as unimproved, by which means some of them were induced to admit that the sum of the two items exceeded their valuation of the whole. It is not difficult to understand how such may

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have been the case, or how the naked lots might have found a more active and competitive market than the same ground incumbered by large and expensive buildings. At all events, the cross-examination affects only the credibility of the witnesses, which the trial court was at least quite as capable of deciding upon as are we, and which we do not regard as having been shaken.

We are unable to discover any error in the record, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

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S. D. MERCER COMPANY, APPELLANT, v. CITY OF OMAHA  
ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,228.

1. **Judgment: Res Judicata.** The rule is well settled, both in this state and elsewhere, that a judgment is an estoppel only as to those matters actually in issue and tried and determined in the action in which it is rendered.
2. **Limitation of Actions.** Section 16 of the code is applicable to ordinary civil actions only.
3. **Cities: ASSESSMENT: RELEVY.** The Omaha charter of 1897 (Comp. St. 1897, ch. 12a, sec. 192) contained sufficient authority for the levy of a special assessment which was attempted to be levied under a former act, but failed because of irregularity in procedure.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county: WILIS G. SEARS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*W. A. Saunders and Albert Swartzlander, for appellant.*

*Harry E. Burnam and I. J. Dunn, contra.*

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*Mercer Co. v. City of Omaha.*

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## AMES, C.

In 1893 the legislature enacted a statute commonly called the "Omaha Charter," by which that city was empowered to create sewer districts and to construct sewers, and for the purpose of providing funds for the payment of the cost of the same to levy special assessments upon abutting property to the extent of the benefits accruing to it therefrom. By this statute it was enacted that, whenever any taxes or special assessments levied in any former year should remain uncollected by reason of any defect, error or irregularity or lack of power in making a levy of the same, the mayor and council should have power to relevy the same upon the same assessment upon which such former levy was attempted to be made, and that such new levy should be in lieu and stead of the former levy. Comp. St. 1893, ch. 12a, sec. 94. In conformity with this statute a sewer district, including certain property of the plaintiff, was created and a sewer constructed therein, and proceedings were had by which the amount of special benefits accruing to the property was ascertained, and thereupon an attempt was made to levy a special tax or assessment upon the property for a corresponding amount. In 1897 the charter was repealed and another enacted in its stead which contains the following provision: "The provisions of this act shall not be so construed as to impair or affect the validity of any tax or assessment heretofore made or levied under the acts by this act repealed, but all such taxes and assessments shall be and remain as valid and binding as if this act had not been passed, and shall be collected and enforced in the manner provided, or which may hereafter be provided by law for collecting and enforcing the same." Comp. St. 1897, ch. 12a, sec. 192.

In 1898, after the new act had gone into effect, the plaintiff began an action in the district court to enjoin the collection of the tax and to cancel the same of record, alleging as reasons therefor two grounds: First, that the property was not benefited by the sewer and that the city was

therefore without right, power or authority to make the levy; and, second, that the mayor and council had undertaken to exercise their powers in so defective and irregular a manner as to render their action ineffectual and void. If the city had been wholly without power, any procedure in the matter by the mayor and council, however formal it might have been, would have been quite nugatory, and the particular sins of omission and commission of which it was accused in the petition would have been immaterial. There was an answer and a reply, and a trial and findings and a decree for the plaintiff perpetually enjoining the tax complained of. Among the findings was a general one that all the allegations of the petition were true. But it is clear that among such allegations the court did not intend to include the conclusion of law that the mayor and council were without power, jurisdiction or authority to levy any taxes upon the property of the plaintiff to defray the cost of improvement, because the court further found especially and inconsistently with that conclusion that "no sufficient or legal notice was given of any meeting of the city council as a board of equalization" of assessments in said sewer district, in so far as the property of the plaintiff was affected thereby, and that therefore an ordinance assuming to levy the tax complained of was, in so far as it purported to affect that property, null and void. And the decree was carefully and explicitly limited to an annulment of the taxes attempted to be levied by that ordinance, and to perpetually enjoin any future attempt at collecting such taxes, and to adjudging the title of the plaintiff quieted against the same.

It is, we think, quite clear from an inspection of the findings and decree themselves that all that the court adjudged, or intended to adjudge, was that the mayor and council had proceeded irregularly and unlawfully, which is equivalent to an adjudication, or at least implies, that it was within their competence to proceed regularly and lawfully. The rule is well settled, both in this state and

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*Mercer Co. v. City of Omaha.*

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elsewhere, that a judgment is an estoppel only as to those matters actually in issue and tried and determined in the action in which it is rendered. *Wilch v. Phelps*, 16 Neb. 515; *Slater v. Skirving*, 51 Neb. 108; *Packet Co. v. Sickles*, 5 Wall. (U. S.) 580; *Russell v. Place*, 94 U. S. 606; 1 Herman, *Estoppel and Res Judicata*, sec. 252.

The foregoing action did not finally terminate until March 3, 1902, and on the 11th day of the same month proceedings were begun by the mayor and council to equalize and re levy the tax in the manner provided by statute, when this action was begun in which it is sought to restrain them from so doing. There was a judgment below for the defendant dismissing the bill and the plaintiff appeals. Appellant argues three grounds for reversal: First, that the matter is adjudged by the former suit; we have already given our reasons for thinking that contention is not sound. Second, that the procedure is barred by the statute of limitations, but he cites no statute having applicability to it. Section 16 of the code has exclusive reference to ordinary civil actions. *Price v. Lancaster County*, 18 Neb. 199. Third, that the act of 1897 repeals the former charter without saving clause, and that therefore the right of the city to levy the tax in question has been taken away. But we think the above quoted clause from the new charter is a sufficient saving clause. The mayor and council have begun the proceeding, sought to be enjoined, for the purpose of enforcing and collecting an assessment attempted to be made under the former act, but which did not fail and was not assailed until after the enactment of the new, and it is provided that the repeal shall not impair or affect the validity of any assessment theretofore made, but that such procedure may be had for its enforcement as the new law provides. The language employed is not the most accurate that could have been chosen, but there is no doubt in our minds about the legislative intent, which should, of course, be carried into effect.

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Irving v. Bond.

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It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

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**NOBLE W. IRVING ET AL., APPELLEES, V. ELLA M. BOND ET AL., APPELLANTS.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,263.

**Contract: PAYMENT.** When one has an option to pay a debt in money or by the conveyance of property, and voluntarily deprives himself of power to make the conveyance, his obligation to pay cash becomes absolute.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county: WILLIS G. SEARS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Charles W. Haller*, for appellants.

*John Q. Burgner, George A. Magney and Baldrige & De Bord, contra.*

**AMES, C.**

Appellants Bond and wife owned a dwelling house property in Omaha, and entered into a contract with the appellee Irving, a contractor, for the making by the latter of certain changes and repairs of and upon the building. The language of the contract, which is in writing, is not well chosen and is somewhat ambiguous, but we think that a fair interpretation of it is that appellants were to pay Irving for his services and materials to be furnished under the instrument the sum of \$1,225, of which \$225 was to be paid in cash, and the remaining \$1,000

*Irving v. Bond.*

by a conveyance to him of a certain other dwelling house, known as the "Poppleton Avenue" property. Irving substantially performed his contract, but before he had completed it the Bonds had conveyed the latter mentioned property to the appellee Mrs. L. J. Sackett, for a consideration price of \$400. Irving then perfected a mechanic's lien upon the property he had repaired and begun this action, making Mrs. Sackett a party defendant, and seeking to foreclose his lien or to obtain specific performance of his contract, or to obtain such other relief as the court was competent to award him. At the instance of Mrs. Sackett, title and possession of the Poppleton avenue property was quieted in her, and in this part of the decree all parties acquiesce. The court also stated the account between Irving and the Bonds, charging the latter with the contract price of \$1,225 and crediting them with such amounts as they had paid on account of the same, and rendered a decree of foreclosure for the residue thereof. The Bonds appeal to this court.

Mrs. Bond testified on the trial that, in her opinion, the value of the Poppleton avenue property did not exceed the sum of \$400 at which it was sold to Mrs. Sackett, and the principal contention of the appellants is that, since the property was agreed to be taken by Irving in satisfaction of \$1,000 of his contract price, they should have been charged upon the account with only its actual value, and that the amount of the decree was therefore too large by the sum of \$600. But we think the court did not err. As we understand the contract, and as we have no doubt that the parties understood it, appellants had an option to pay \$1,000 of the contract price in money or by conveyance of the property in question. Having voluntarily deprived themselves of the power to make a conveyance, they have now no alternative but to satisfy their obligation in cash. Such a transaction differs in some respects from an ordinary executory contract for the purchase and conveyance of land. In the latter case the vendee is entitled, at his option, to have specific per-

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formance, if that is possible, but in the former he is not so entitled; but in either case, if the consideration has been paid or performed, and the vendor is guilty of a breach, the vendee may demand restitution and interest, so that the practical distinction is inconsiderable. *Terrill v. Frazier*, 79 Ind. 473; *Pinney v. Gleason*, 5 Wend. (N. Y.) 393; *Stuart v. Pennis*, 100 Va. 612, 42 S. E. 667; *Thompson v. Guthrie*, 9 Leigh (Va.), 101, 33 Am. Dec. 225.

There are certain alleged errors of small items in the statement of the account which we do not very well understand, and which counsel did not take pains to explain by oral argument. Their aggregate is not considerable, and the trial court who had the advantage of hearing the witnesses and making an original investigation presumably did not err with respect to them. On the whole, we discover no error and recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

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JOHN T. CATHERS, APPELLANT, v. AUGUST H. HENNINGS,  
CITY TREASURER, APPELLEE.

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,576.

1. Statute: TITLE. It is competent to embrace in one act every detail of legislation connected with, or having direct reference to, the subject expressed in the title.
2. Cities: INCORPORATION. In an act incorporating a certain class of cities, and prescribing and regulating their duties, powers and government, it is competent to enact that the treasurer of the county in which the only city of that class is situated shall be *ex officio* treasurer of the city.

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*Cathers v. Hennings.*

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APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
WILLIS G. SEARS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Frank T. Ransom*, for appellant.

*John P. Breen* and *W. H. Herdman*, contra.

AMES, C.

In 1905 the legislature enacted for the government of the city of Omaha a new law (laws 1905, ch. 14) entitled "An act incorporating metropolitan cities and defining, prescribing and regulating their duties, powers and government and to repeal" all prior statutes on the subject. The act purports to be and, if valid, is comprehensive and complete in itself, providing a complete scheme of government for the one city in the state which answers to the description of municipalities to which it professes to apply. From this scheme the offices of tax commissioner and of locally elective city treasurer, which had existed under a former law, are omitted, and in lieu of the latter it is enacted, in effect, that the treasurer of Douglas county in office when the act shall go into force, and his successors in office, from time to time to be elected and qualified, shall be *ex officio* treasurer of the city also. The act destroys the tenure of the present city treasurer, and directs him to turn the moneys and effects of his office over to the county treasurer to be administered by the latter as the statute provides. This action is by the appellant, who describes himself as a resident and taxpayer of the city, and is brought on behalf, not of himself only, but of all other persons similarly situated and interested, for the purpose of obtaining an injunction perpetually to restrain the city treasurer from obeying the requirements of the act. A general demurrer to the petition was sustained by the district court and the action dismissed.

The sole object of the action is to assail the constitutionality of the new charter. It is first contended that the

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title is not broad enough to cover all the subjects of legislation contained in the act, but this objection surely cannot be upheld. The title is more, rather than less, comprehensive than that which was upheld in *State v. Palmer*, 10 Neb. 203, and which has served as a model for titles of acts providing for the incorporation and government of municipalities in this state for more than 25 years. It is analogous to a title to "provide a system of revenue" or to "provide a criminal code." It has never been seriously doubted, so far as we know, that such a title is broad enough to embrace every detail of legislation connected with or having direct reference to the object therein expressed as the subject of the act.

It is next objected that the act, in so far as it has reference to the office of city treasurer, is in conflict with that clause of section 10, art. V of the constitution, which forbids the appointment or election of any public officer by the legislature, and it is said that the designation, by the act, of the county treasurer as *ex officio* city treasurer is practically an appointment to the latter office by the legislature. This argument appears to us to be far-fetched. It is rather a designation of the territorial qualifications of electors who shall be entitled to choose a city treasurer for Omaha. Similar statutes have been in force in this state from the beginning, as, for example, the school law, which provides that city and village treasurers shall be *ex officio* treasurers of school districts composed in whole or in part of the same or conterminous territory as the city or village in which they are situated. If this objection is valid, it applies with at least equal force to that provision of this and the last preceding charter of the city of Omaha providing for the appointment by the governor of a board of fire and police commissioners for the city, which might, perhaps, be contended by counsel to be also a subject not embraced within the title to the act.

It is further contended that the act attempts to confer new powers and duties upon a county officer in violation of the principle announced in *Haverly v. State*, 63 Neb.

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83. The objection applies with at least equal force to the clause just mentioned, with reference to the appointment of a fire and police board. But, in reality, the principle of the decision cited is not involved in this controversy. In that case it was attempted, in an act passed and purporting to be for the creation and government of municipalities, to regulate the powers and prescribe the duties of a county officer with respect to his functions as such—to say in what districts certain assessors should be chosen for the assessment of property for county taxation. In the present instance nothing of the kind is undertaken, but, the county treasurer having had conferred upon him the office of city treasurer also, the act merely prescribes and regulates his powers and duties in the latter capacity and with reference to the affairs of the city entrusted to his charge. It is urged, too, that, as the school law enacts that the city treasurer shall be *ex officio* treasurer of the school district, the charter by vacating the office of city treasurer deprives the school district of a treasurer also, but, as we have attempted to show, the city office is not vacated, the only change effected being in the manner of filling it.

A great number of instances are pointed out in which it is claimed that doubts and inconveniences will arise with respect to the extent and validity of the powers and duties of various city and school district officers and the time and manner of their exercise under the new charter, and the sufficiency of the adaptation of means and procedure to the change in organization caused by the substitution of the new treasurer for the old and by the abolition of the office of tax commissioner, but it will be soon enough to discuss these questions when they are brought to the attention of the court by some one having a direct interest in them, and in a suit in which they shall be properly in issue, so that a decision of them will have the force of a judicial adjudication, which we are of opinion cannot be done in a suit by one who is merely an unofficial resident and taxpayer. It is indeed urged, and the district court

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State v. Drexel.

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was convinced, so it is said, that the plaintiff has not sufficient interest to maintain the present suit, but we have thought it prudent for the public interest to express an opinion on the main issues, leaving that question undiscussed and only inferentially decided. We are satisfied that the act is not void, and that the change it makes in the manner of choosing a city treasurer is not in violation of the constitution, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

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**STATE, EX REL. WILLIAM G. URE, APPELLEE, v. JOHN C. DREXEL, COUNTY CLERK, ET AL., APPELLANTS.**

**STATE, EX REL. EMMET G. SOLOMON, APPELLEE, v. JOHN C. DREXEL, COUNTY CLERK, ET AL., APPELLANTS.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. Nos. 14,593, 14,594.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
**WILLIAM A. REDICK, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*Fawcett & Abbott and W. W. Slabaugh, for appellants.*

*John P. Breen and W. H. Herdman, contra.*

**AMES, C.**

These cases arose under chapter 46, laws of 1905, by which it was attempted to extend for definite periods the terms of office of two of the county commissioners of Douglas county. At the expiration of the terms for which said commissioners had been elected, the appellees applied to the district court for Douglas county for writs of man-

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damus to compel the printing of their names as candidates upon ballots to be voted at a primary election of the republican party in that county. The court held the act to be void in the particular mentioned and granted the writ. The respondents appealed. The case is ruled by *State v. Plasters*, 74 Neb. 652. No useful purpose would be accomplished by repeating here the reasons there adduced. It is recommended that the judgments be affirmed.

**OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.**

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgments of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

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**UNITED STATES FIDELITY & GUARANTY COMPANY v. HENRY RIECK.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,159.

**Foreclosure: APPEAL: SUPERSIDEAS.** A surety on a waste bond given to supersede an order of confirmation of sale in a foreclosure proceeding is not liable to the mortgagee, nor to the purchaser at the sale, for taxes assessed against the property pending the final confirmation of the sale in the supreme court.

**ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WILLIAM A. REDICK, JUDGE.** *Reversed and dismissed.*

*McGilton, Gaines & Storey, for plaintiff in error.*

*Charles Battelle and William Baird & Sons, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an action by the purchaser at a mortgage foreclosure sale against the surety on an appeal bond to recover the amount of the taxes which accrued pending the appeal from the order of confirmation in the supreme

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United States Fidelity & Guaranty Co. v. Bleck.

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court. There was a judgment for the plaintiff in the court below, and to reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

The sole question presented is whether or not the sureties on a bond for appeal from a confirmation of a sale of real estate are liable for the taxes assessed against the property pending the appeal. The condition of the bond for appeal in such cases, before the amendment of 1903, was that, if the defendant "will prosecute such appeal without delay, and will not during the pendency of such appeal commit, or suffer to be committed, any waste" on the real estate in controversy, then this obligation to be void, otherwise to remain in full force and effect. The bond was executed on the 6th day of March, 1901, and on December 3, 1902, this court affirmed the order of the district court. When the mandate was returned the purchaser at the sale received his deed, and paid the taxes which had accrued pending the appeal, and brought this action against the surety on the bond to recover the amount of the taxes so paid. There was no allegation that the appeal was not prosecuted diligently, the sole contention being that defendant is liable for waste because of his failure to pay taxes pending the appeal.

In determining the question as to whether or not a mortgagor in possession is liable to the mortgagee, or a purchaser at a foreclosure sale, for taxes accruing prior to the final confirmation of the sale, it is necessary to determine the rights and liabilities of each to the other under the laws of this state. In the first place, it is the property and not the person that is liable for taxes on realty in this state. In the second place, in this state a mortgage is treated as a security for the debt, and the title to the real estate remains in the mortgagor until final confirmation of the sale. Both of these propositions are too well established to require the citation of any authorities, so that if there be any liability to the plaintiff on the appeal bond declared upon it is for a breach of the condition against waste pending the appeal, or, stated

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differently, because the failure to pay taxes by the mortgagor while in possession pending the final confirmation of the sale constitutes a permissive waste of the inheritance. The term waste, as used in the statute, and in the bond given in conformity with the provisions of the statute should be construed according to its accepted legal significance. In 1 Blackstone, Commentaries (Chitty's ed.), p. \*284, the definition of the term is: "Waste is a spoil or destruction in houses, gardens, trees, or other corporeal hereditaments to the disherison of him that hath the remainder or reversion in fee simple or fee-tail." In 4 Pomeroy, Equity Jurisprudence (3d ed.), sec. 1348, the term is defined as follows: "Waste is the destruction or improper deterioration or material alteration of things forming an essential part of the inheritance, done or suffered by a person rightfully in possession by virtue of a temporary or partial estate—as, for example, a tenant for life or for years." In 1 Washburn, Real Property (4th ed.), p. \*108, it is said: "But whatever the act or omission is, in order to its constituting waste, it must either diminish the value of the estate, or increase the burdens upon it, or impair the evidence of title of him who has the inheritance. Waste, in short, may be defined to be whatever does a lasting damage to the freehold or inheritance, and tends to the permanent loss of the owner of the fee, or to destroy or lessen the value of the inheritance." An action to recover for waste, within the meaning of any of these generally accepted definitions, must be brought by the owner of the fee for some act of omission or commission done by one in possession under an inferior estate, or by a mortgagee or other lien holder to protect his security, or recover for an injury thereto, where the security would be or is rendered inadequate by the commission of such waste. Now, while the mortgagor remained in possession of the mortgaged premises pending the final confirmation of the sale, he was then holding as owner of the fee, with a right to redeem at any time before the sale

was finally confirmed and the deed ordered, and his position toward the mortgagee and the purchaser at the foreclosure sale was that of a debtor to a creditor, and not that of one in possession by an inferior estate to the remainderman or the owner of the inheritance.

If the security was inadequate the plaintiff had his remedy by application for a receiver to collect the rents and profits of the mortgaged premises pending the final determination of the appeal. But, instead of availing himself of this remedy, he has chosen to sue the surety on the appeal bond for a breach of the conditions against waste, and, in our view, he cannot recover, because the action of waste must be founded upon the violation or nonperformance of some duty or obligation that the person in possession owes to the owner of the inheritance. A tenant for years might by the terms of his lease owe the duty of paying taxes to the landlord, but in the absence of a stipulation to that effect in the lease such duty would not attach. Between the remainderman and a tenant for life it is universally held that it is the duty of the tenant for life to pay the taxes on the inheritance, and that on the neglect of the tenant for life to do so an action in the nature of waste may be maintained against him by the remainderman. This right, however, is founded on the reciprocal duties existing between a tenant for life and the owner of the inheritance. But, as before pointed out, the relationship of remainderman and tenant of an inferior estate does not exist between mortgagee and mortgagor under the laws of this state. In *Kersenbrock v. Muff*, 29 Neb. 530, it was held that the mortgagee could not maintain a personal action against the mortgagor for taxes paid by the mortgagee. The opinion says:

"While the payment under the mortgage created a lien in favor of the plaintiff on the mortgaged premises for the amount, it did not establish the relation of debtor and creditor. The mortgagee cannot look beyond the land and enforce the amount paid for taxes by a personal judgment against the mortgagors."

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Taylor v. Hunter.

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This conclusion is supported by the holdings in *Clark & Leonard Investment Co. v. Way*, 52 Neb. 204, and *Woodworth v. Northwestern M. L. Ins. Co.*, 185 U. S. 354.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to the court below to dismiss the plaintiff's petition.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to the court below to dismiss the plaintiff's petition.

REVERSED.

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HERBERT E. TAYLOR V. W. L. HUNTER ET AL.

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,271.

**ERROR: REVIEW.** Where an examination of the pleadings filed and the evidence offered in support thereof shows that the party complaining procured a judgment more favorable to him than the law and the evidence warranted, we will not, at his request, examine alleged errors of the trial court in receiving testimony and in giving and refusing instructions.

**ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE.** *Affirmed.*

*Joshua Palmer, F. I. Foss and R. D. Brown, for plaintiff in error.*

*Frederick Shepherd, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an action for damages for fraud and deceit alleged to have been practiced upon plaintiff by the defendants in selling him three and one-half shares of the capital

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stock of the Hunter Printing Company, the material allegation being that no such company was ever legally incorporated, and that this fact was well known to the defendants, who falsely represented to the plaintiff that the Hunter Printing Company was legally incorporated under the laws of the state of Nebraska. Defendants answered with a general denial and other special defenses not necessary to be set forth in view of the conclusion about to be reached. There was a trial of the issues to the court and jury, and a verdict and judgment for plaintiff in the sum of \$47. To reverse this judgment plaintiff brings error to this court.

The evidence contained in the bill of exceptions shows that, for several years before the purchase of the shares of stock alleged upon, plaintiff had been in the employ of a printing company managed by defendant Hunter; that the name and control of the company had changed several times during the course of his employment; that, some years before the sale of the stock complained of, the company had been duly and legally incorporated under the name of the Lillibridge-Hunter Printing Company, with a capital stock of \$15,000; that under this name it had continued in business until Lillibridge sold his shares of stock in the corporation to defendant Hunter. At the time of this sale and transfer of stock, the minutes of the corporation show that the name was changed from the Lillibridge-Hunter Printing Company to the Hunter Printing Company. The amended articles of incorporation, however, were never filed for record with either the secretary of state or the county clerk of Lancaster county. The stock certificate sold and delivered to plaintiff had been printed as a certificate of stock in the Lillibridge-Hunter Printing Company, but when delivered to plaintiff the name Lillibridge was scratched out with a pen and the name Hunter Printing Company left in the certificate. Afterwards the articles of incorporation were amended and the amended articles filed, changing the name of the corporation to the Hunter-Woodruff Printing Com-

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pany and increasing the capital stock from \$15,000 to \$25,000. And still later the articles of incorporation were again amended, changing the name from the Hunter-Woodruff Printing Company to the Woodruff-Collins Printing Company, and increasing the capital stock from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

It appears that the stock was purchased while plaintiff was in the employ of the company under the management of defendant Hunter; that at that time plaintiff was receiving \$12 a week for his services in the company. Mr. Hunter offered to raise his wages to \$15 a week, and to reserve \$3 a week to be credited to him on the purchase of the stock in the corporation, if he would remain in its employ. He continued in the employ of the company until the amount of stock due him was four and one-half shares of the par value of \$100 a share. He then quit the employ of the company and accepted a position in Chicago, Illinois. When he left for his new position he traded one of his shares of stock to M. Hunter, and retained the three and one-half shares, on which this suit was founded. After plaintiff had gone to Chicago the articles of incorporation were amended and the name changed to the Hunter-Woodruff Printing Company, and plaintiff was given an additional one and one-half shares of the Hunter-Woodruff Printing Company stock as a dividend, which he still retains. The three and one-half shares of the Hunter stock were carried on the books of the new company to his credit, and a four per cent. dividend on his five shares of stock was paid him, and received and retained by him. After the company had again increased its capital stock and filed its amended articles of incorporation, changing its name to the Woodruff-Collins Printing Company, plaintiff returned to Nebraska and tried to sell his shares of stock to Mr. Hunter and to Mr. Woodruff. Mr. Hunter declined to purchase his stock because he had retired from the firm, but offered to try and find a purchaser for him, if plaintiff would leave the stock in his hands. Plaintiff thereupon instituted this suit against

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defendants Hunter and Baker, president and secretary, respectively, of the Hunter Printing Company, charging fraud and deceit.

There is not a scintilla of evidence in the record sufficient to sustain any charge of either fraud or deceit against either of these defendants in the transaction. Consequently, the verdict in favor of the plaintiff for \$47 was a pure gratuity to him. It is not complained of by the defendants, however, and for that reason it will not be set aside. Plaintiff's cause of action, if any, is one for an accounting with the Woodruff-Collins Printing Company for his proportionate share of the stock and dividends in that corporation. The fact that he is entitled to no relief whatever under the allegations and proof in the case at bar renders further examination of the alleged errors at the trial unnecessary.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**UNITED STATES FIDELITY & GUARANTY COMPANY V. WILLIAM MC LAUGHLIN ET AL.\***

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,184.

**Official Bonds: Construction.** A bond given for the faithful discharge of the duties of one legally entrusted with state and county funds is an official bond, and the statutory provisions relative thereto enter into and become a part of the contract.

**ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 310, *post.*

*O. B. Polk and R. S. Mockett, for plaintiff in error.*

*T. J. Doyle, contra.*

EPPERSON, C.

From January, 1900, until January, 1902, the defendant in error, McLaughlin, was the county treasurer of Lancaster county, and at the beginning of his term appointed one Edgar Waugh an assistant in his office. Waugh was required by his principal to execute the bond herein sued on, with the plaintiff in error as surety, whereupon he entered upon the duties of the position, and was authorized to sign and issue official tax receipts in the name of his principal, and in fact to perform all the official duties of the county treasurer except to sign checks. The bond fixes the maximum liability of the obligors at \$1,500, and contains the following preamble and conditions: "Whereas Edgar Waugh of Denton, Nebraska, hereinafter called the employee, has been appointed to the position of deputy treasurer in the service of William McLaughlin, treasurer Lancaster county, Nebraska, hereinafter called the employer, and has been required to furnish bond for his honesty in the performance of his duties in the said position. \* \* \* Now, therefore, \* \* \* the company shall \* \* \* make good and reimburse to the employer all and any pecuniary loss sustained by the employer \* \* \* by any act of fraud or dishonesty on the part of said employee in connection with the duties of the office or position herein before referred to, and occurring during the continuance of this bond or any renewal thereof, and discovered during said continuance or within six months thereafter." This bond and a renewal thereof covered a period of two years ending in January, 1902, during which time Waugh dishonestly appropriated sums aggregating \$4,000 collected by him by reason of his position. His dishonesty was not discovered until 1904, and when the amount embezzled was ascertained defendant in error

paid the amount thereof to the county treasurer of said county.

Plaintiff in error contends that the condition in the bond, limiting its liability to such wrongs of the employee as shall be discovered within six months from the expiration of the time covered by the bond, is effective as a limitation upon its liability. The soundness of this proposition, in our opinion, depends upon the nature of the position held by the employee, which in fact governs the character of the bond. If the instrument is not an official bond, then it seems that the contention of the plaintiff in error is correct. On the other hand, if it is an official bond, then the statutory provisions enter into and become a part of the contract, imposing upon the surety all the statutory obligations incident to the contract.

Counsel for plaintiff in error in his briefs and oral argument contended that the bond was personal, given for the benefit of defendant in error, and that it was never required nor recorded as an official bond, and that Waugh was not in fact a deputy treasurer. Waugh was not the chief assistant in McLaughlin's office, nor was he officially designated as deputy treasurer. He was, however, an assistant or clerk authorized to act for and in the name of his principal, intrusted with the duty of handling public funds. He was a public officer. Section 21, ch. 10, Comp. St. 1905, contains the following provision: "Any officer or person who is intrusted with funds belonging to the state or any county thereof, which may come into his posession by an appropriation or otherwise, shall be responsible for the same upon his bond, and when any officer or person is intrusted with any such funds and there is no provision of law requiring him to give a bond in a certain specified sum, he shall give bond in double the amount of the sum so intrusted to him, which \* \* \* in case of county funds \* \* \* shall be approved by the county commissioners and deposited in the county clerk's office." The bond in controversy was given for the faithful performance of the duties of one who was

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intrusted with funds belonging to the state and county. The rules governing such instruments are the statutory provisions fixing the liability of public officers, and the law pertaining thereto enters into and becomes a part of the contract. *Holt County v. Scott*, 53 Neb. 176. Under chapter 10 of the Compiled Statutes sureties on an official bond are liable to the person wronged by the officer's unlawful conduct discovered within the period of the limitation for actions thereon. The provision in the bond here in controversy, which purports to excuse the obligors from liability for wrongs not discovered within six months after the expiration of the time, is of no effect. By reason of the bond Waugh was given the official position he held, with all the benefits thereof, and with the opportunity, which otherwise he would not have had, to convert the public funds to his own use. The plaintiff in error, as surety upon said bond, was by its terms estopped from denying that Waugh was a public officer; that the bond was not payable to the proper party; and that it was not approved by the county commissioners as provided by law. *Holt County v. Scott*, 53 Neb. 176; *Paxton v. State*, 59 Neb. 460.

There is no error in the record, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed October 18, 1906. *Judgment of affirmance adhered to:*

1. **Official Bonds: ESTOPPEL.** In an action on a bond, given to the county treasurer by one in his employ, to recover for a default in the transaction, as deputy, in the name of the treasurer, of business pertaining to the treasurer's office, a recital in the bond that the principal is deputy treasurer in the service of the treasurer of the county will estop the sureties on the bond to deny that he was in fact such deputy treasurer and that the bond was an official bond.

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2. ——: CONSTRUCTION. A clause in the bond of a deputy county treasurer, which limits the right of action thereon, for default of the deputy treasurer, to such default as shall be discovered during the continuance of the bond or within six months thereafter, cannot be enforced.

SEDGWICK, C. J.

In the oral argument which was allowed upon the motion for rehearing, and in the brief filed in support of the motion, it was strenuously contended that the bond sued upon is not an official bond. In the former opinion herein it is said that whether the condition in the bond limiting its liability to such wrongs of the employee as shall be discovered within six months from the expiration of time covered by the bond is effective as a limitation of liability "depends upon the nature of the position held by the employee, which in fact governs the character of the bond. If the instrument is not an official bond, then it seems that the contention of the plaintiff in error is correct." Upon a reinvestigation of the record we do not find it necessary to determine that question. There appears to be some merit in the contention that such a limitation would not be enforced even in a private contract. The object of the limitation appears to be to secure to the obligor in the contract an opportunity to investigate the circumstances of the alleged default within a short time after its occurrence. It does not in direct terms limit the time in which the action may be brought. If the fraud or dishonesty of the employee is discovered within the time specified, action may be brought thereon at any time within the limitations of the statute. Whether this amounts to an attempt to deprive the courts by contract of jurisdiction to enforce the terms of that contract, or to adjudicate the damages caused by its breach, is a question that it does not appear to be necessary to determine in this case.

We think that it was correctly determined in the former opinion that the defendant is not in a position to contend that the contract in suit is a private bond. It ap-

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pears that the bond was never filed with or approved by the county board. It was not made payable to the county, that is, the county was not named as the obligee in the bond; and, also, it appears from the evidence that one McGuire was duly appointed deputy county treasurer, and gave a bond as such which was approved by the county board, and took the oath of office and was duly qualified. He appears to have succeeded one Manley, who apparently acted as deputy for a few months of the first part of Mr. McLaughlin's term. The statute provides that the county treasurer may have a deputy, and if this statute should be construed as limiting the county treasurer to one deputy, and if it appears that Mr. Waugh was appointed after these deputies were qualified, and the validity of his appointment was brought directly and not collaterally in question, his right to act as such deputy might reasonably be questioned. The bond in suit recites that "Edgar Waugh \* \* \* has been appointed to the position of deputy treasurer in the service of William McLaughlin, treasurer, Lancaster county, Nebraska, \* \* \* and has been required to furnish a bond for his honesty in the performance of his duties in said position." The evidence shows that his employment was confined wholly to the duties of the office of county treasurer. He performed every duty that the county treasurer could perform with the exception of signing checks upon the bank account of the treasury. As a part of such duties he collected the taxes, the conversion of which to his own use constituted the default for which the action is brought. He gave the taxpayers receipts for their money, which he executed in the name of the county treasurer, signing himself as deputy. The bond plainly contemplated that he should perform such services, and the recital in the bond that he was to perform such services as deputy treasurer would estop the sureties upon the bond to deny that he held such a position. The surety cannot be heard now to assert as a defense that Waugh was under these circumstances a second deputy and that the treasurer had no

authority to appoint such second deputy. Mr. McLaughlin made good to the county the loss caused by Waugh's defalcation. If he had not done so, there could be no doubt that the county might have maintained an action upon this bond, executed in the name of its treasurer to secure the safety of the county funds.

The question of the proper construction of the clause "and discovered during said continuance or within six months thereafter," in view of the other conditions and the manifest purpose of the undertaking, has been much discussed. The statute prescribes the conditions of bonds to be given by deputy county treasurers. Section 20, ch. 10, Comp. St. 1905, provides: "Deputies shall, except as otherwise especially provided, give bonds in the same manner and for the same sum as their principals." Section 12 of the same chapter provides: "All official bonds shall be obligatory upon the principal and sureties, for the faithful discharge of all duties required by law of such principal, for the use of any persons injured by a breach of the condition of such bonds." Section 3 requires that bonds of county officers must be "with such conditions as required by this act, or the law creating or regulating the duties of the office." Actions on official bonds may be brought within ten years after the cause of action accrues. Code, sec. 14. The policy of the law undoubtedly is to require the deputy treasurer to give a bond protecting the public against his default, if discovered, and action be brought thereon within the time limited by the statute. A provision in such a bond, which is in violation of the statute, and requires an official duty of the officer which is not required by law, and places a limitation upon the right of action given by the statute, is against public policy, and void. In *Fidelity & Casualty Co. v. Consolidated Nat. Bank*, 71 Fed. 116, which was upon a bond containing similar provisions, the defalcation was discovered within six months after the term for which the bond was given had expired, the construction and force of this clause of the bond was therefore not involved. The bond contained the

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further provision: "That any claim made under this bond or a renewal thereof, shall embrace and cover only for acts and defaults committed during its currency, and within twelve months next before the date of the discovery of the act or default upon which such claim is based." The trial court appears to have recognized the validity of this clause of the bond, and the circuit court of appeals assumes its validity in discussing errors assigned in the giving of an instruction. The action was upon a private bond; and whatever view we might take as to the effect of such a clause in the bond of an employee of a bank, we cannot recognize the case as giving a proper construction of the official bond of a deputy county treasurer under our statutes.

We think our former conclusion is right, and it is adhered to.

AFFIRMED.

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**MARYLAND CASUALTY COMPANY v. BANK OF MURDOCK.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,204.

1. **Appearance.** A written offer to confess judgment in favor of the plaintiff, filed by the defendant in an action to recover money, is a general appearance which will give the court jurisdiction over the person of the defendant.
2. **Evidence examined, and held sufficient to justify the trial court in submitting the case to the jury.**

ERROR to the district court for Cass county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Montgomery & Hall*, for plaintiff in error.

*C. S. Polk, contra.*

**EPPERSON, C.**

This was an action instituted by the defendant in error, hereafter called plaintiff, against the plaintiff in error,

hereafter called defendant, in the district court for Cass county upon a contract of indemnity or policy of insurance against burglary. The process which the plaintiff relied on was a summons served on the auditor of public accounts. A special appearance was filed by the defendant, which was overruled, and the same objectionable service was alleged in the answer. However, prior to the filing of the answer, the defendant filed a written offer to confess judgment for \$25.

The first question for our consideration is whether or not the offer to confess judgment was a general appearance or a submission to the jurisdiction of the court. The offer was filed for the purpose of saving costs to the defendant in the event that the final adjudication would result in the recovery of no greater sum, and for this purpose the defendant thereby invoked the power of the court. The party filing an offer to confess judgment recognizes the authority of the court to render judgment for the amount due on the cause presented. As the defendant thus entered a general appearance we deem it unnecessary to consider the defendant's objections to the process.

By the contract defendant indemnified plaintiff against damages to its bank building or contents by burglars, and also against loss of money abstracted by burglars making entry into a certain safe by the use of tools or explosives directly thereupon. On the night of the 25th of January, 1904, and during the time covered by the contract, burglars entered plaintiff's building, and damaged the same to the extent of \$25, and abstracted from the safe described in the contract money amounting to \$1,489.30. The defendant acknowledged its liability for the \$25 damage committed to the premises, but denied liability for the money stolen, alleging that the safe from which the money was abstracted was not entered by the use of tools or explosives directly thereupon.

The question tried was whether or not the burglars resorted to the use of tools applied directly upon the safe.

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The officer in charge of the bank testified that on the evening preceding the night of the burglary he locked the safe by a time lock, and no evidence was given directly to the contrary. It was the uncontradicted evidence that, if the safe had been locked, it could not have been opened, except by the use of tools or explosives. The defendant argues that, as the safe presented no marks or other signs of violence applied thereto, it necessarily results that the safe had not been locked, as the bank officer testified, and therefore no tools or explosives had been used. There was some evidence indicating that it was possible to open the safe in controversy by striking the same with a heavy hammer or other instrument after changing it to a certain position, and this evidence was sufficient, in our opinion, to submit to the jury, and for this reason the court did not err in refusing to instruct the jury to return a verdict for the defendant. We are not called upon to decide this case upon the evidence, for thereby we would usurp the office of the jury. We are only required to ascertain whether or not the proof adduced upon the trial contains sufficient evidence to justify the trial court in submitting the case to the jury; and, believing it sufficient, to be consistent, we must uphold the verdict. It necessarily follows that the court did not err in giving instructions excepted to by defendant in substance, that the only issues of fact for them to try were as follows: First. Was the safe, from which it is alleged the money of the plaintiff was taken by burglars, opened by the use of tools or explosives used directly upon said safe? Second. What amount of money, if any, was taken from the said safe?—and that they must find such facts established by a preponderance of the evidence before the plaintiff may recover; and that, if they find that the safe in controversy was opened by the burglars in any other manner except by the use of tools or explosives used directly thereupon, then they should return their verdict for the defendant. These instructions were proper, and, with others not challenged, fairly submitted the questions in the controversy to the jury.

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We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

**AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.**

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

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**SCHOOL DISTRICT, APPELLANT, v. JENNIE COWGILL ET AL.,  
APPELLEES.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,259.

1. **Injunction: TITLE TO OFFICE.** —The title to public offices, and the rights to exercise the functions thereof by persons claiming title thereto by election, cannot be determined in a suit for injunction.
2. **An injunction suit cannot be maintained to restrain the teaching of school by a qualified teacher under a contract signed by *de facto* officers of the school district.**

APPEAL from the district court for Phelps county: LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*G. Norberg and W. A. Garrett, for appellant.*

*A. J. Shaffer and H. M. Sinclair, contra.*

**EPPERSON, C.**

This action was instituted in the name of school district No. 77 of Phelps county by Homer Fuqua, who claims to be treasurer of said school district. He seeks to restrain the defendant Mrs. Cowgill from teaching the school, and the defendants Doe and Hornbeck, respectively, from acting as treasurer and moderator of that school district. Upon the institution of the suit a temporary order of injunction was issued, which upon trial was dissolved, and the plaintiff's action dismissed. Defendants introduced in

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evidence a contract signed by Mrs. Cowgill, as teacher, and by her codefendants as treasurer and moderator, respectively, which contract provided for an eight months' school. Under the terms of the contract Mrs. Cowgill taught the school five weeks, when this suit was instituted. The defendants Doe and Hornbeck, who signed the contract for the school district, claim their offices by reason of an election thereto at the annual school district meeting of 1904. The evidence shows that they were elected to these offices without objection by *viva voce* vote, declared elected and qualified. Doe gave his official bond to the director, who made no objections to the sufficiency thereof, and Hornbeck filed with the director his written acceptance. About two months later, at a special meeting in which six electors participated, one Hottenstein was chosen moderator. The electors present also elected a treasurer, who did not attempt to qualify. Later the director and Hottenstein appointed Fuqua treasurer. He filed a bond, and now claims that he is the treasurer of said school district, contending that the defendants Doe and Hornbeck are not the officers they claim to be, because elected by *viva voce* vote, instead of by ballot as provided in sec. 1, subd. III, ch. 79, Comp. St. 1903.

The director of the district refused to recognize Doe and Hornbeck as officers, and refused to cooperate with them in attending to the business of the school district, and for this reason, if in fact they were the legally qualified treasurer and moderator, the contract they made with the defendant Mrs. Cowgill was legal. We are therefore expected to determine in this an injunction suit whether or not the contracting officers, when they executed the contract, were legally authorized so to do. In other words, to have granted the plaintiff's petition, the trial court would have been required to inquire collaterally as to the right of the contracting officers to exercise the function of the offices, and to have found that they were not such officers. Mr. Fuqua, who is prosecuting this suit, claims the office of treasurer by an appointment from the director and moder-

ator. The evidence discloses the fact that two persons claim the office of moderator. If Mr. Hottenstein was not moderator, then Fuqua's appointment was void, and plaintiff would have no standing in court. These problems cannot be solved in an injunction suit. In 2 High, Injunctions (4th ed.), sec. 1312, we find the following: "No principle of the law of injunctions, and perhaps no doctrine of equity jurisprudence, is more definitely fixed or more clearly established than that courts of equity will not interfere by injunction to determine questions concerning the appointment or election of public officers, \* \* \* such questions being of a purely legal nature, and cognizable only by courts of law. A court of equity will not permit itself to be made the forum for determining disputed questions of title to public offices, or for the trial of contested elections, but will in all such cases leave the claimant of the office to pursue the statutory remedy, if there be such; or the common law remedy by proceedings in the nature of a *quo warranto*." In the case of *Burke v. Leland*, 51 Minn. 355, the supreme court of Minnesota refused to entertain an action for injunction to restrain persons assuming to act as members of the village council, the plaintiff claiming that such persons had not been duly and lawfully elected. That court said:

"It is well settled that the question of their title to the office, and right to exercise its functions, cannot be determined in a suit for an injunction or in *mandamus* proceedings. *State v. Williams*, 25 Minn. 340. The defendants could only be restrained from the performance of acts shown to be unlawful or unauthorized, if attempted to be performed by a lawfully elected council."

But plaintiff contends that the acts of defendant, Mrs. Cowgill, in teaching and using the schoolhouse for school purposes, assisted by her codefendants, amounted to a continuing trespass, and therefore it is entitled to the restraining order. But whether or not they are trespassers depends upon their rights to the offices they claim, and, as above stated, that question cannot be inquired into in this

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action. If Mr. Fuqua desired seriously an adjudication of the rights of the parties claiming the offices, he should have resorted to the remedy provided by statute in a direct proceeding, wherein the necessary parties were made litigants. The defendant, Mrs. Cowgill, who is a qualified teacher, presented as a defense a contract signed by officers, who were able to and did put her in possession of the school-house for school purposes, and who claim the offices by an election at the annual meeting. If not officers *de jure* they were *de facto*. Proof of the contract was a sufficient defense to the plaintiff's action as to the defendant Mrs. Cowgill.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

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**STATE OF NEBRASKA, APPELLEE, v. SEVERAL PARCELS OF  
LAND ET AL., APPELLANTS.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,261.

1. **Cities: SIDEWALKS: NOTICE: EVIDENCE.** Proof by affidavit required by a city ordinance of the publication of a notice to nonresident property owners to construct sidewalks is not conclusive; but the fact of publication may be proven by other evidence.
2. **Sidewalks: ASSESSMENTS: DEFECTIVE NOTICE.** Under a city ordinance providing that the city council may cause the construction of certain sidewalks along the street line of lots belonging to nonresidents and assess the costs thereof to the property, if the same were not constructed by the owner within 15 days after the publication of a notice to him, the city council obtained the right to construct such improvements and assess the costs thereof, even though the notice named a date for the construction thereof.

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by the owner less than 15 days subsequent to the last publication. The provisions of the city charter and ordinances become a part of the notice, and the property owner is bound thereby.

**APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:**  
**ALEXANDER C. TROUP, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*O. C. Redick, for appellants.*

*W. W. Slabaugh, John P. Breen and W. H. Herdman,  
contra.*

**EPPERSON, C.**

The proper authorities instituted an action in the district court for Douglas county under the scavenger laws of 1903 for the sale of several tracts of land for the payment of state and county taxes, and the general and special taxes levied for municipal purposes by the city of Omaha. Among the tracts of land are several lots belonging to the appellant, who filed his answer in the district court, objecting to the sale of his property for the payment of certain special taxes levied thereon by the city council. Ordinance 4,244 of the city of Omaha established a mode of procedure for the construction of sidewalks in said city. It provided in substance that, whenever the city council and mayor deemed it expedient, they could require the construction of sidewalks in front of or adjacent to any premises, along any street in the city, by resolution; that upon the passage of a resolution, notice should be served on the owner of the premises adjacent to or abutting such sidewalk; and that said notice should state that after the expiration of 15 days from the service thereof the sidewalk ordered to be laid would be laid by the contractor holding a contract with the city of Omaha and that the costs of the laying of such sidewalk would be assessed upon the property described. In the event that the owner was a nonresident of the city of Omaha, the ordinance provided that such notice should be published in the official papers of the city for ten days,

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and made it the duty of the board of public works to cause affidavits to be made of the service of the notice, and to carefully preserve the same in the office of the city board.

At the time of the construction of the sidewalks in controversy, appellant was a nonresident of the city of Omaha. The affidavit showing publication of notice to appellant indicated that it had been published but six days, and this appellant contends is conclusive as to the publication. Neither the statute nor the ordinance makes it necessary as a condition precedent to the construction of the sidewalks by the city, nor the taxation of the property, that the proof of publication be filed; the ordinance does provide that the affidavit shall be filed and preserved in the office of the board of public works, but it was the publication of the notice, and not the filing of the affidavit, which conferred jurisdiction upon the city authorities to construct the sidewalk and levy the taxes complained of. The affidavit was presumptive evidence, but not conclusive as to the publication of the notice. The ordinance provided a mode which is sufficient, but not exclusive. The rule as to notices required by city ordinances is no more stringent than the rule governing notices required by statutes. In the case of *Larimer v. Wallace*, 36 Neb. 444, it is held: "Proof by affidavits of posting public notices is not exclusive. The statute merely provides a mode which is sufficient, but does not provide that it shall supersede all other forms of proof." And as the evidence introduced by the appellee shows the publication of the notice for the time required by the ordinance, we are convinced that the failure to file the affidavit with the city authorities as provided by the ordinance does not constitute a reason for declaring that the city council was without jurisdiction to levy the tax.

The last publication of the notice was on November 3, and notified the appellant that he would be required to construct a sidewalk on or before November 9, or that the city authorities would construct the same as provided by law, and levy a special assessment upon his lots to pay the

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costs thereof. The ordinance provided that the improvements should be made by the city authorities after the expiration of 15 days from the giving of the notice, and, on account of this irregularity as to time, appellant claims that the notice is insufficient to give the city authorities jurisdiction to levy the special taxes. One section of the ordinance made it the duty of the owner of the premises to construct the sidewalk within 15 days after the service or publication of the notice so to do. The proof shows that the city did not order the sidewalk constructed until 30 days later than the last publication. This is analogous to the case of *Eddy v. City of Omaha*, 72 Neb. 550, modified on rehearing, 72 Neb. 559. In that case this court had under consideration a notice required by an ordinance providing that the publication should give a 30 days' notice; the notice construed recited that the thirty days would expire on a day, less than 30 days subsequent to the publication. Upon rehearing the court said:

"Appellant now argues that, though the notice informed the property owners that the 30 days would expire at noon on August 31, this was a mere irregularity, because the charter, the ordinance and the notice itself informed them that they had 30 days from the publication of the notice within which to designate said material; citing *Armstrong v. Middlestadt*, 22 Neb. 711, and *Scarborough v. Myrick*, 47 Neb. 794. We are of the opinion that this argument is sound. That if, in fact, 30 days had elapsed before the council took any action upon the matter, the recital in the notice that the time would expire several days before the 30 days elapsed would be merely an irregularity, and would not prevent the council from acquiring jurisdiction."

Applying this rule to the case at bar, it follows that the notice was sufficient to inform the appellant that, in the event he did not construct the improvements required within the time provided by the ordinance, the city would do so and tax his property for the payment thereof. After the expiration of 15 days from the last publication the city

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had the right to and did construct the improvements. It necessarily follows that the appellant's property was liable to taxation for the payment thereof, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

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**OTIS K. HOLLIDAY v. WILLIAM A. MCWILLIAMS.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,202.

1. **Lands: Sale: Contract: Evidence.** The written contract required by section 74, ch. 73, Comp. St. 1905, may be evidenced by letters passing between the parties.
2. **—: Description.** Where such letters contain data from which a description of the land placed with an agent for sale or barter can be ascertained with certainty, the contract may be enforced.

**ERROR to the district court for Harlan county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. Reversed.**

*John Everson*, for plaintiff in error.

*R. L. Keester, contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

The petition upon which the plaintiff seeks to recover states that in December, 1903, the defendant was the owner of a farm of about 520 acres in Platte county, Nebraska, and orally represented to plaintiff that he desired to trade said farm for town property or a stock of goods; that if plaintiff would find for him a trader for said land at prices, terms and conditions to be fixed by the defendant, and with whom defendant would consummate a suitable

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exchange, he would pay the plaintiff the sum of \$300 as a compensation; that the promise was afterwards renewed and confirmed by letters and correspondence passing between plaintiff and defendant, copies of which are attached to the petition. It is alleged that plaintiff found a trade which was suitable and satisfactory to the defendant and that defendant consummated a trade in February, 1904; that deeds were exchanged between defendant and the party furnished by plaintiff, and the exchange of properties fully consummated on February 10, 1904. Judgment is asked for \$300 and 7 per cent. interest from February 10, 1904.

The letters attached as exhibits are, first, one from plaintiff to defendant dated January 9, 1904, in the following words: "W. A. McWilliams, Munroe, Neb. Dear Sir: When we were at Burwell you wanted me to look you up a trade in our town for your farm and I spoke of J. Egleson having a stock of hardware and three storerooms combined that he might trade. I spoke to Mr. Egleson about it and he talked favorable and wanted your address to write to you, so when he writes give him what information you can and invite him to see what you have and I believe we can make a trade with him. Let me hear from you when you get word from him and I will see if I can't get him to go and see what you have. If his letter is favorable you might send me those photographs of the farm and I could show him what the farm looks like. Yours truly, O. K. Holliday."

McWilliams' reply to this letter was written from Monroe, Platte county, Nebraska, under date of January 23, 1904. After excusing delay, he urges Holliday to get his man to go and see the farm, describes the farm as being all fenced and cross-fenced, 200 acres under cultivation, 160 acres in hay, mostly alfalfa, balance pasture. He then adds: "I will give him a trade and put in my land at \$50 per acre. We have a mortgage on it that amounts to about its cash value. There is 517.70 acres according to government patent. This mortgage can be

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renewed easily. The farm will carry it easily. The accretions from the river, mostly covered with grass, make the farm about 530 acres. We want pay for what the patent calls for although we have a deed for all. Do your best and do it quickly. Have him come up at once to see the farm and if he likes it, will go back with him and trade with him if I find his property fairly near what he says it is, but he must see my farm first and see if he wants it or not, as I mean just what I say and will trade as I said above. Respectfully, W. A. McWilliams. The land is only three miles from the county seat."

Under date of January 26, 1904, the plaintiff replied to this letter, saying that he thought that Mr. Egleson, his customer, would visit the land in two or three days. He further states that he understood from the talk he had with McWilliams that the land was close to Columbus and that some hotel there had better be named where Egleson could meet McWilliams. He also suggests that McWilliams write to Egleson, telling him where he would meet him, and to have Egleson write a day ahead.

In reply to this letter McWilliams wrote the following: "Monroe, Platte county, Nebraska. O. K. Holliday, Alma, Nebraska. Dear Sir: Please observe closely what I write. I have just received a letter from Mr. F. E. Herron. He is asking me to pay him a regular commission. Now I cannot afford to allow him to come in for a commission for I cannot afford to take any less. So if you can handle Mr. Egleson and get him away from Herron and get Egleson and bring him up and stop at Clothier Hotel in Columbus, wire me at Monroe at least a half day in advance when you will be there and I will meet you there, take you to see the land and bring you to Monroe where we will draw up the particulars. You urge me to go back with you and I will go and if his property is fairly near what he says it is I will then and there close the deal with him. If you cannot, then notify me by return mail and if you will take \$100 for your share I will give Herron the other

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\$200 for him to bring him. Let me know without the least delay. Land is selling quite often here for \$75 per acre. The land I am offering is all black sandy loam soil. The only thing that can be said is that the farm was farmed by a man who was not able to farm it last year and of course he could not mow the farm along the roads and lanes as he should. When you get him to Monroe take him to the bank of Monroe and ask Mr. W. Webster about the land."

In reply Holliday wrote under date of January 30, the material parts of the letter being as follows: "Now you please to pay close attention to what I say and that is this: I don't divide my commission with Mr. Herron or anyone else. Mr. Herron is to get his pay from Mr. Egleson as he told me he intended to pay him if the deal was made." The letter further states that the writer had seen Egleson and that he thought Egleson would visit the land the next day.

Replying to this McWilliams wrote as follows: "I will say in reply to your letter just received, that I will not pay any commission to anyone unless they are able to get their man and keep them until the deal is closed and they must help to close it. So if you are working Mr. H. J. Egleson for me in this deal you must keep at him and keep him in your hands and you must stay with him and close the deal. I am not offering and do not need anyone to work me in this deal or any other. So if you have your man put him up and if you are the means of making the trade I will pay what we agreed upon. If you are not the means of getting the trade with me I will pay you nothing. You must earn your money if you want it. In other words, you must work the deal through to a finish or you have not earned your money."

A demurrer was interposed to the petition, which was sustained by the court, and, the plaintiff electing to stand on his petition, judgment was entered dismissing his case and he has brought the record here for review. Defendant, in support of his demurrer, relies on section 74, ch.

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73, Comp. St. 1905, as follows: "Every contract for the sale of lands, between the owner thereof, and any broker or agent employed to sell the same, shall be void, unless the contract is in writing and subscribed by the owner of the land and the broker or agent, and such contract shall describe the land to be sold, and set forth the compensation to be allowed by the owner in case of sale by the broker or agent."

In *Bradley v. Bower*, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 542, it was held that a contract sufficient to meet the requirements of the statute above quoted may be created by letters between the parties, and may be sufficient though the same papers are not signed by both. We are inclined to believe that the letters above quoted from are sufficient to show a contract of agency and the amount of the commission agreed upon. It is true that McWilliams does not, in express terms, say that he will pay Holliday \$300 for finding the party with whom he may trade the land, but in one of the letters he does say that, if Holliday will take \$100 for his share, he will give the other \$200 to Herron if Herron can secure Egleson as a customer—a statement in the nature of an admission that \$300 was the commission agreed upon—and in his last letter he makes a distinct and express agreement to pay the commission if Holliday is the means of securing a trade. The only objection that can reasonably be made to the contract evidenced by these letters is the failure to specifically describe the land, and this, we believe, under the holding of many courts in cases involving the same principle, is not fatal to the plaintiff's case. In actions brought for the specific performance of contracts to convey real estate, the land must be described in the contract with such clearness and accuracy that it can be identified and its boundaries determined beyond the possibility of future controversy; and yet there are many cases in which no specific description of the land has been given, where it has been referred to in general terms, in which it has been held that the action could be maintained. The rule

undoubtedly is that that is definite and certain which can be made certain by parol proof which does not contradict what appears in writing. As stated in *Gerrish v. Towne*, 3 Gray (Mass.) 82:

"Where general terms only are used to designate the subject matter of the agreement or conveyance, or the description is of a nature to call for evidence to ascertain the relative situation, nature and qualities of the estate, then parol evidence is not only admissible, but is absolutely essential to ascertain the true meaning of the instrument, and to determine its proper application with reference to extrinsic circumstances and objects. In such cases parol evidence is not used to vary, contradict or control the written contract of the parties, but to apply it to the subject matter, and thereby to render certain what would otherwise be doubtful and indefinite." To the same effect is the holding of our own court in *Ballou v. Sherwood*, 32 Neb. 666, and *Adams v. Thompson*, 28 Neb. 53; *Ruzicka v. Hotovy*, 72 Neb. 589.

It clearly appears from the letters above quoted from that photographs of the buildings had been taken and that the letters were written in view of these photographs. The farm is described as located three miles from the county seat (Columbus), as fenced and cross-fenced, 200 acres under cultivation, 160 acres in hay, mostly alfalfa, and the balance in pasture; that there are 517.70 acres according to government patent, and that by accretions from the river there are really 530 acres. From this data and from the county records, it seems quite clear that the land could be fully identified and a specific description ascertained.

We conclude, therefore, that the court erred in sustaining the demurrer to the plaintiff's petition, and recommend that the judgment be reversed and the cause remanded, with leave to the defendant to answer if he be so advised.

ALBERT, C., concurs.

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with leave to the defendant to answer if he be so advised.

REVERSED.

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**A. A. KANNOV & SONS v. FARMERS COOPERATIVE SHIPPING ASSOCIATION.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,222.

1. **Contract: MISNOMER.** The contract upon which suit was brought described the plaintiff as Farmers Cooperative Shipping Association of *Alma, Nebraska*, its true name being Farmers Cooperative Shipping Association. *Held*, That, if a misnomer, it was immaterial under the circumstances, as the record and the circumstances under which the contract was made were conclusive that the defendants knew the corporate body with which they contracted and did business. 1 Thompson, Corporations, sec. 294.
2. **Evidénce.** No proof is needed of admitted facts.
3. ——: **ACCOUNTS.** An expert accountant may testify to the results of an examination and computation of complicated accounts, the books, checks or memoranda making up the account being first introduced in evidence. *Bee Publishing Co. v. World Publishing Co.*, 59 Neb. 713.

ERROR to the district court for Harlan county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed*.

*Starr & Reeder*, for plaintiffs in error.

*John Everson*, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

The Farmers Cooperative Shipping Association, a Kansas corporation, brought suit against A. A. Kannow & Sons, alleging in its petition that the parties entered into a written contract, by the terms of which the defendants were to purchase grain, as agents for the plaintiff, from August 10, 1903, to June 1, 1904; that the grain was to

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be purchased and shipped from Alma, Nebraska, and vicinity, under the control and instructions of the plaintiff and at prices fixed from time to time as the occasion demanded; that defendants were to receive one and three-fourths cents a bushel for the grain so bought and shipped; that this employment continued until September 16, 1903, when the same was terminated by the plaintiff, for the reason that the defendants, in violation of their contract and instructions, wrongfully and corruptly paid sums greatly in excess of the amount they were allowed and instructed by plaintiff to pay for wheat; that during the time of the continuance of the agency defendants purchased 8,432 bushels and 19 pounds of wheat which was paid for by checks drawn by the defendants upon the funds of plaintiff in the Harlan County Bank at Alma, Nebraska; that checks have been drawn and paid to the amount of \$4,749.52; that defendants have paid out of plaintiff's funds the sum of \$373.15 in excess of what they were authorized to pay, making a total of \$5,122.67 of plaintiff's money used by the defendants during their employment. It is further alleged that defendants have shipped to the plaintiff 6,919 bushels of wheat, of the value of 3,726.63 and no more, and that they have converted to their own use and refused to deliver to the plaintiff the remainder of the wheat so purchased, and have refused to repay the plaintiff the sum of \$373.15 paid out in excess of the amount authorized, all to the plaintiff's damage in the sum of \$1,248.48, for which judgment is prayed. The contract of agency is in the following words: "Alma, Nebraska, July 25, 1903. This article of agreement made and entered into the day and year above written by and between the Farmers Cooperative Shipping Association of Alma, Nebraska, and A. A. Kannow & Sons, agree to buy, weigh, receive, store and ship grain for a compensation of one and three-fourths cents per bushel, from the time of the beginning to receive the grain until June 1, 1904. This agreement being made subject to approval of C. B. Hoffman, General Manager,

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Enterprise, Kansas. A. A. Kannow, for A. A. Kannow & Sons. Geo. T. Ashby, Pres. F. C. S. A. E. E. Arnold, Secy. F. C. S. A."

The answer of the defendants is quite lengthy and, among other matters, alleges that the petition does not state a cause of action; that there is a defect of parties plaintiff, a defect of parties defendant, a general denial, matters in avoidance, and two counterclaims which the district court directed the jury to disregard. There was a judgment for the plaintiff below for \$897.67, and the defendants have taken error to this court.

The first point made in the brief of plaintiff in error is that the action is brought by a Kansas corporation, while the agreement upon which it is based was made by the defendants with a Nebraska corporation. It will be noticed that in the agreement above set out the Farmers Cooperative Shipping Association is described as, "of Alma, Nebraska," while the petition in the case alleges that the association is a Kansas corporation. Nowhere in the answer of the defendants is it alleged that the agreement which it made with the Farmers Cooperative Shipping Association was with a Nebraska corporation, and the only indication that such is the case is that in the agreement the Farmers Cooperative Shipping Association is followed by the words, "of Alma, Nebraska," which was evidently no part of the corporate name and was clearly a mistake of the party drafting the agreement, as the evidence shows, without conflict or contradiction, that the corporation named in the agreement is a Kansas corporation and that such was the understanding of every one having any connection with the case. The answer of the defendants clearly establishes that they were at all times aware that this agreement was with, and what they did under it was for, a Kansas corporation. Why they should attempt a defense excusing their nonperformance of a contract, and seek to enforce a counterclaim against a party with whom no contract was made, is not explained nor is it subject to explanation. The fact that the words,

"of Alma, Nebraska," followed the corporate name of the plaintiff in the action did not change the character of the contract or the legal rights of the parties, as long as no one was misled thereby, and all proceedings had under the contract were with full knowledge of the actual status and location of the corporation plaintiff. It is an undoubted rule that, where an action is brought on a written instrument by one not a party to it, in order to maintain a suit the plaintiff's interest in the instrument must be made to appear affirmatively by proper allegations in the petition. But this rule, we think, has no application to this case, as the party bringing the action was the real party in interest and the party with whom defendants contracted.

Objections were made to the introduction in evidence of certain letters passing between the defendants and C. B. Hoffman, general manager of the plaintiff. The objection was that the letters were not sufficiently identified as coming from the defendants. It appears from the record that an attachment issued in this action and was levied upon certain real estate of the defendants. On a motion made to dissolve the attachment the letters referred to were used as evidence, and were placed in the hands of the court reporter. The attorney for the plaintiff below afterwards secured these letters from the reporter and sent them to Mr. Hoffman at Kansas City, where his deposition was taken and the letters attached as exhibits. This is clearly established. On the trial of this case Mr. Kannow himself testified that the letters turned over to the court reporter on the hearing of the motion to dissolve the attachment were, so far as he knew, all the correspondence that had taken place between his firm and Mr. Hoffman. It thus stands admitted on the record that these letters were sent by Kannow & Sons to Hoffman, and it can hardly be claimed that proof of admitted facts is necessary.

Relating to the character of the grain purchased by Kannow & Sons, it need only be stated that Mr. Kannow's

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own testimony shows that it was wet and damp at the time of purchase, that it became moldy, and that some that remained upon his hands after the termination of his agency was worth "not to exceed a half dollar a bushel at top price, and that some of it was not worth over 25 to 35 cents—was not equal to rye."

Objection is also made to the evidence of Mr. Senter, a witness for the plaintiff below, who made a computation from the weigh-checks issued by defendants to those from whom wheat was purchased, and upon which they procured their pay from the Harlan County Bank. These checks were in evidence. They were issued by Kannow & Sons, and contained a statement of the amount of wheat had from the seller, the price paid, the character of the wheat, and other items material to the state of the account between the parties. It is urged that this was usurping the province of the jury who alone had the right to make the computation. Mr. Senter was the auditor of the plaintiff corporation and an expert accountant. He was not allowed to state deductions and inferences of his own judgment, but merely the result of his computation, and we think, under the authorities, that his evidence was admissible and that the court did not err in receiving it. 2 Elliott, Evidence, sec. 1053; *Jordan v. Osgood*, 109 Mass. 457; *Frick v. Kabaker*, 116 Ia. 494.

These are the principal errors relied upon for a reversal of the case. Other matters of minor importance are discussed, but a careful examination of the whole record convinces us that there was no prejudicial error requiring a reversal of the case, and that the verdict of the jury is amply sustained by the evidence and might have been for a larger sum.

We recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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## CATHERINE MARTIN V. ANTHONY MARTIN.

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,223.

1. **Instructions: PROCEDURE.** All instructions should be read to the jury in open court, and where, after retiring, the jury desire further instructions on the law of the case, they should be brought into court, there to receive such instructions. If, in answer to a request, further instructions are sent to the jury room by the bailiff in charge, the record should show the consent of the parties to this procedure.
2. **Adverse Possession.** One who has acquired absolute title to land by adverse possession for the statutory period does not impair his title by thereafter paying rent to the owner of the paper title.
3. **Deed: ACKNOWLEDGMENT.** As between the parties a deed of real estate, not a homestead, is good without being acknowledged.
4. ———: **DELIVERY.** A delivery of a deed by the grantor to a third person for the grantee, with directions to deliver it to such grantee, constitutes a sufficient delivery of a deed of conveyance.

ERROR to the district court for Thayer county: LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*M. S. Gray, J. F. Peters and Mockett & Mattley*, for plaintiff in error.

*Morning, Berge & Ledwith, M. H. Weiss and T. C. Marshall*, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

Catherine Martin, the plaintiff in error and plaintiff in the court below, brought this action in ejectment against her son Anthony Martin to recover possession of the northwest quarter of section 17, township 4, range 2 west, Thayer county, Nebraska. Michael J. Martin, the deceased husband of the plaintiff, was the patentee of this land and in his will, which was duly probated in the state of Pennsylvania where he lived and died, and also in Thayer county, Nebraska, where the land is situated, he

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gave to the plaintiff a life estate therein. The petition is the usual petition in ejectment, and the answer, in addition to a general denial, sets up the following defenses: That in February, 1878, the land, which was then worth not to exceed \$500 and was wholly unimproved, was owned by Michael J. Martin, the father of the defendant; that about that date Michael J. Martin, who was then located in Pennsylvania, proposed to the defendant that he go west and locate, and, as an inducement thereto, promised defendant the land described in the petition on the condition only that the defendant would locate in the state of Nebraska, and remain and establish himself, and improve the land in question; that about that time the said Michael J. Martin made and executed to the defendant a deed to said land and conveyed the same to the defendant in fee simple, which deed, before its delivery to the defendant, fell into the hands of one John J. Martin, who concealed it for many years, and then, as a condition of its delivery, undertook to extort money or property from the defendant. It is further alleged that the defendant accepted the proposal of his father, and left the state of Pennsylvania and went to Thayer county, Nebraska, in February, 1878; entered into possession of the land in dispute, and has ever since been in the actual, open, exclusive, continuous, hostile, notorious and adverse possession of the same; that in 1878 he broke up and put the land in cultivation, and has ever since cultivated the same, planted fruit and ornamental trees thereon, and that the same is in a high state of cultivation; that his father, during his lifetime, made no claim of ownership, nor did he demand rent for said land, and that since his father's death in 1886 the plaintiff has never demanded possession from the defendant nor rent for use of the premises. He alleges that he has acquired title by adverse possession, that the plaintiff's action is barred by the statute of limitation and asks to have his title quieted. The reply was a general denial. The jury returned a general verdict for the defendant, and a finding that at the date

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of the commencement of the action defendant was the owner and entitled to the possession of the premises. The jury also returned certain special findings to the effect, first, that in January, 1878, Michael J. Martin promised and agreed to give the defendant the land in dispute on the condition above set out, and that the defendant, acting under such agreement, entered into the actual possession of said land and performed the condition of said agreement; second, that Michael J. Martin and his wife, Catherine, in January, 1878, made and executed a deed to the land in dispute to the defendant, that said deed was delivered to John J. Martin for the purpose of being delivered to Anthony Martin, the defendant, and that Michael J. Martin intended to have it so delivered; third, that the defendant, for more than ten years prior to the commencement of the action, had been in actual adverse possession of the land under a claim of ownership. Judgment was entered on the verdict and special findings of the jury in favor of the defendant and the plaintiff has brought the case here for review.

After the jury had been instructed and had retired to consider their verdict, they sent the following communication to the court by the bailiff having them in charge: "Is a will made in one state in force and effective in another state, the will having been probated in the state in which it was executed?" In relation to this the record contains the following: "And which said request and question being presented in open court, all parties being represented by counsel, the same was by the court called to their attention, and, upon due consideration whereof, the court, upon his own motion and in answer to the above question and request of the jury, gave the following instruction in writing, said instruction being sent to the jury room by the court through the bailiff, to wit: 'The jury is instructed, in answer to the attached question, that the probate of a foreign will in this state is the statutory and legal method of proving the facts creating a right of inheritance, and, when probated here in Ne-

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braska, all the rights thereunder relate back to the time when the same became effective in the original jurisdiction,' to which act of the court, in the giving of such supplemental instruction, the plaintiff then and there duly excepted."

The method of giving this instruction is assigned as error. It is urged that our statute requires all instructions to be in writing and to be read by the court to the jury, and much force is placed upon section 287 of the code, to the effect that if the jury, after they retire, desire to be informed as to any part of the law arising in the case, they may request the officer to conduct them to the court, where the information upon the point of law shall be given. The precise question here presented has never before been raised and passed on by the court. Aside from the requirements of our statute, it is a general principle, which obtains everywhere, that all instructions to the jury shall be delivered in open court. 11 Ency. Pl. & Pr. 275; *Hopkins v. Bishop*, 91 Mich. 328, 51 N. W. 902. We do not mean to say that, where, as often happens, the court is engaged in a trial when a request like that in question is presented, he cannot, by consent of parties, send his answer to the jury by the bailiff in charge thereof; but the record ought to show that consent was given, in order that no controversy may thereafter arise. The exception taken by the plaintiff is not clear and definite, the language being, "to which act of the court, in the giving of such supplemental instruction, the plaintiff then and there duly excepted." It is possible that this should be considered as an exception to the method of instructing the jury, instead of to the substance of the instruction given, and if it be construed as an exception to the method there can be no doubt that the court was in error in proceeding as it did. The error, however, was without prejudice, in view of the special findings of the jury. Not only did they find that the defendant had been in the actual adverse possession of the premises for more than ten years prior to the commencement of the action, but

they found also that the plaintiff and her husband, during his lifetime, made and delivered to the defendant a deed of the premises conveying to him the fee title. In this condition of the case, any error committed by the court in the manner of instructing the jury upon other points in the case is immaterial.

Objection was made to the introduction of the deed of Michael J. Martin to the land in controversy, for the reason that the same was acknowledged before a justice of the peace, and no certificate was attached, as required by statute, showing the official character of the justice. The signatures of the grantors were proved. It is familiar law that, except in the conveyance of a homestead, the acknowledgment is not essential to the validity of a deed. It only goes to the right to have the deed recorded. As between the parties a deed without any acknowledgment is good.

Complaint is made of the refusal of the court to give the following instruction asked by the plaintiff: "You are instructed that if you find from the evidence that the defendant did, at any time within ten years next preceding the filing of this suit, to wit: November —, 1903, recognize or acknowledge the legal estate and right of possession of the plaintiff, in any manner, by the payment of rent for the use of said land to plaintiff or to any other person, or that the defendant recognized the right of plaintiff or any other person, in any manner whatsoever, by the payment of rents, or any acts of the defendant in connection with said land, or the use thereof, inconsistent to the claim of defendant, that he is the owner, then the claim of defendant that he is the owner of said land by adverse possession cannot be sustained, and you must find the legal estate and right of possession to be in plaintiff." In argument it is insisted that any act of the defendant recognizing ownership by the plaintiff within ten years prior to the commencement of the action defeats his claim of title to the land by adverse possession. There was evidence from which the jury might have found that the de-

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fendant, at the request of his mother, paid rent to his sister within ten years prior to the commencement of the action, but the evidence was conclusive that the defendant had entered into possession of the land in 1878 or 1879, and held actual possession from that time to the date of the trial. If, as he contends, and as the jury were warranted in finding, his possession was under a claim of ownership, then his title had accrued and become perfect many years prior to the commencement of the action. The law is well settled that recognition of title in the former owner by one claiming adversely, after he has acquired a perfect title by adverse possession, will not divest him of title. In *Riggs v. Riley*, 113 Ind. 208, 15 N. E. 253, it is held that, where, by open and continuous adverse possession of land under claim of ownership for over 20 years by a person and his grantors, he has gained title thereto in fee, payment of rent by him thereafter for two years to the person having the paper title, and a subsequent survey procured by the latter without objection on the part of the former, will not defeat the title already gained by adverse possession. In *School District v. Benson*, 31 Me. 381, 52 Am. Dec. 618, it is said: "But the title, obtained by disseizin so long continued as to take away the right of entry, and bar an action for the land by limitation, cannot be conveyed by a parol abandonment or relinquishment, it must be transferred by deed." And in *London v. Lyman*, 1 Phila. (Pa.) 465, it is said: "Adverse possession for twenty-one years is a title, it cannot be defeated by a subsequent recognition of a previous title, which, originally rightful, has lost that character by a delay to enforce it." There was no error in refusing the instruction. Other instructions to the effect that the jury must find the defendant's possession to be actual, open, continuous and adverse for at least ten years next immediately preceding the commencement of the action were refused, but as the court had instructed to the same effect on its own motion, and also that the burden was upon the defendant to establish the adverse character of his holding, there

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was no need of repeating the same and no error in refusing to do so.

In its third instruction the court said to the jury: "The third defense interposed by the defendant is that Michael J. Martin, now deceased, and his wife, Catherine Martin, conveyed the premises to him by deed of general warranty, a copy of which is attached to the petition, marked "Exhibit A," and that by reason and by virtue of said deed he became seized of the premises and is owner thereof." In her brief the plaintiff says: "As we have pointed out, this is contrary to the answer of the defendant, is contrary to the statement of the case by the court, and is not claimed by the defendant in instructions asked by him of the court. The answer simply pleads two defenses: First, a parol agreement to convey the land; and, second, the statute of limitations. The deed was simply plead as an incident to the parol agreement and was not set up as a defense, and it has never been claimed by the defendant in this case that the deed was delivered." The plaintiff must have overlooked the fourth paragraph of the defendant's answer, as follows: "In pursuance of the proposition above set forth, the said Michael J. Martin, at or about the time last aforesaid, made and executed to this defendant a deed to the land described in plaintiffs' petition, a copy of which deed is hereto attached, marked "Exhibit A," and made a part hereof, and thereby conveyed to this defendant an absolute title in fee simple to the premises described in plaintiff's petition, which deed as aforesaid, before its delivery to this defendant, fell into the hands of one John J. Martin, who concealed it for many years and then, as a condition of its delivery, undertook to extort money or property from this defendant as a condition precedent to the delivery of said deed." A pleading alleging that a deed was made and executed sufficiently pleads a delivery, *Brown v. Westerfield*, 47 Neb. 399, and there was evidence to sustain a finding by the jury that the deed was actually delivered by the grantors to John J. Martin, with directions to deliver it to the

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defendant. That this is the theory upon which the case was tried is evident from the third instruction of the court, in which he informed the jury that, in order to be effective to pass title, a deed must be delivered, and that a delivery must be shown by a fair preponderance of the evidence; and if the deed was delivered by Michael J. Martin to defendant Anthony Martin, either by himself or by some one authorized and directed to do so, it would be sufficient.

It is insisted that the judgment and verdict are not supported by the evidence. The witnesses contradicted each other on many material points and there are letters in the record, signed by the defendant, addressed to his mother and other relatives, which are not fully and clearly explained. It is quite well established that the defendant cannot write except to sign his own name, and that these letters were written by his wife, some of them without his knowledge or at least not at his dictation or direction. These letters point quite clearly to a recognition of his mother's title, and the explanation is, as above stated, that they were written without his direction or consent. There is also evidence of his payment of rent, but not before the statute of limitations ran in his favor, provided, as found by the jury, he has asserted title to the land in question since his occupancy in 1878 or 1879. On the other hand, there is evidence tending to show that he visited his father just prior to his death in 1886, and was then told that this land was his, and that the deed had been delivered to John J. Martin for delivery to him, and that he received letters to the same effect directing him to request delivery of the deed from his brother John. There is also evidence tending to show that the plaintiff had stated, after the dismissal of another action involving title to this land, that they had always intended this tract for the defendant; that the land was his and that she would not have brought an action had she not been persuaded by some of her other children. Probably we would have been better satisfied with a verdict for the plaintiff, but

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from the conflicting and contradictory testimony given by witnesses who were, to a certain extent, interested in the result, some of whom, we regret to say, must have testified knowingly to facts which had no existence, as the conflicting statements could not possibly have been through error or forgetfulness on their part, it is a case in which the facts and the credibility of the witnesses are particularly suited for the determination of a jury, who saw and heard the witnesses and who were more or less acquainted with many of them. Under the rule so well and long established, that this court will not set aside the verdict of a jury found on conflicting evidence, regardless of our own opinion of what the verdict should be, we cannot interfere with the findings of the jury.

The petition in error contains more than 100 assignments. We cannot attempt to notice them all, and many of them relate to the same matter. The special findings, we think, dispose of the matters material to a disposition of the case. That there were some rulings on questions of evidence which were technically incorrect may be true, but these errors could have no weight with the findings of the jury on the question of the making and delivery of a deed to the premises by defendant's father, and the finding on that question is conclusive of the case.

We recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

**ALBERT** and **JACKSON**, CC., concur.

**By the Court:** For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

**MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA V. LIZZIE WILSON.****FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,225.**

1. **Insurance, Application for: CONSTRUCTION.** Questions in an application for insurance which, with the assured's answers thereto, are made a part of the contract of insurance are to be construed most strongly against the insurer.
2. **Good Faith: QUESTION FOR JURY.** Where such questions are so framed or placed that the assured may have honestly mistaken their true import, and gave answers thereto which are in fact untrue, but true as he may have reasonably understood the questions, it is for the jury to say, in the light of the entire transaction, whether in making his answers he acted honestly and in good faith, and without intention to misrepresent or conceal any material fact.
3. **Application: ANSWERS.** In answer to a question in such application calling for the names of the ailments for which the assured has been treated and the names of the physicians who treated him therefor, the assured is not required to give the name of every ailment, however trifling, or of every physician he has consulted, but may confine his answer to such ailments as are of a serious character.
4. **Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain a finding that the answers of the assured were given honestly, in good faith, and without any intention to deceive the insurer.**

ERROR to the district court for Pierce county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Talbot & Allen and B. D. Smith, for plaintiff in error.*

*Barnhart & Free and W. W. Quivey, contra.*

**ALBEET, C.**

This is an action on a beneficiary certificate issued to the plaintiff's husband by the defendant, a fraternal insurance association, in which the plaintiff is named as the beneficiary. The application upon which the certificate was issued was made by the assured on the 22d day of January, 1902, and is in writing on a blank furnished by

the association. The blank application contained a large number of questions which the assured was required to answer, a blank space for his answer following each question. Among the questions and answers, shown by the application, are the following:

"(14) Have you within the last seven years been treated by or consulted any physician, or physicians, in regard to personal ailment?" "Yes." "If so, give dates, ailment, and physician's or physicians' name and address." "1900, Dr. Allen. Grip."

"(15) Are you now of sound body, mind, and health, and free from disease or injury, of good moral character and exemplary habits?" "Yes."

"(21) Have you been an inmate of any infirmary, sanitarium, retreat, asylum or hospital?" "No."

Then follows this statement: "I have verified each of the foregoing answers and statements from 1 to 28, both inclusive, adopt them as my own, whether written by me or not, and declare and warrant that they are full, complete, and literally true, and I agree that the exact literal truth of each shall be a condition precedent to any binding contract issued upon the faith of the foregoing answers. I further agree that the foregoing answers and statements, together with the preceding declaration, shall form the basis of the contract between me and Modern Woodmen of America, and are offered by me as a consideration for the contract applied for, and are hereby made a part of any benefit certificate that may be issued on this application, and shall be deemed and taken as a part of such certificate; that this application may be referred to in said benefit certificate as the basis thereof, and that they shall be construed together as one entire contract."

The application is attached to the certificate and is expressly made a part of the contract evidenced thereby. The certificate contains these express provisions: "That the Modern Woodmen of America is a fraternal-beneficiary society, incorporated, organized and doing business under the laws of the state of Illinois, and legally

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transacting such business in the state where said member resides; that the application for membership in this society made by the said member, a copy of which is hereto attached and made part hereof, together with the report of the medical examiner which is on file in the office of the head clerk, and is hereby referred to and made part of this contract, is true in all respects, and that the literal truth of such application, and each and every part thereof, shall be held to be a strict warranty and to form the only basis of the liability of this society to such member, and to his beneficiary or beneficiaries, the same as if fully set forth in this benefit certificate. (2) That if said application shall not be literally true in each and every part thereof, then this benefit certificate shall, as to the said member, his beneficiary or beneficiaries, be absolutely null and void." The assured died on the 14th day of December, 1902, a little less than eleven months after the date of his application. Payment on the certificate was refused, hence this suit. The defense now relied upon is that the answers hereinbefore set out, of the assured to questions in the application made by him, were made by him in regard to matters within his knowledge and material to the risk, and that such answers are incomplete and untrue.

It conclusively appears from the evidence that the assured suffered from some bodily ailment from late in 1899 to midsummer of the following year. During that period he was treated, successively, by Dr. Alden, who is mentioned in the answer numbered 14, and four or five other physicians. About ten days of the latter part of this period the assured was treated at the home of one of the physicians in the city of Norfolk. Whatever may be the proper designation of the place in which he was treated at that time, in the evidence it is sometimes designated as a sanitarium, and again as the home of the doctor. He left the doctor's home or sanitarium the latter part of June, 1900, and according to the doctor's evidence he was cured of his ailment, and practically sound and well. From that

time until the date of his application he was engaged in farming and other heavy work, and the evidence would sustain a finding that, to himself and others, he seemed to be in good health. There is considerable conflict in the evidence as to the nature and severity of the ailment for which the assured was treated during the period mentioned. Some of the physicians testified that it was pernicious anemia, which is classified as an incurable disease; others that it was merely jaundice, and readily yielded to treatment. It is inferable from the evidence that whatever may have been the technical name of the ailment, or its nature, it originated in an attack of *la grippe*. The evidence also leaves room for a difference of opinion as to the nature of the ailment of which the assured died; one line of testimony tending to show that it was pernicious anemia, another that he died of an ailment resulting from injuries received after his application had been accepted. The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, and from a judgment rendered thereon the defendant prosecutes error. The court submitted the case to the jury on the theory that incomplete or untrue answers to questions in the application would not defeat a recovery on the certificate unless such answers, or some of them, were intentionally incomplete or false and made with intent to deceive. Whether that theory is sound is the question now presented by the record.

The theory upon which the trial court submitted the cause is now vigorously assailed; the defendant contending that the honesty and good faith of the assured in making the answers in question are eliminated from the case because such answers are in regard to matters which were within the personal knowledge of the assured and untrue. In support of this contention the defendant invokes the rule announced in *Royal Neighbors v. Wallace*, 73 Neb. 409, which is as follows:

“An untrue answer in an application for life insurance in regard to matters which are shown to be within the knowledge of the applicant and are material to the risk will avoid the policy.”

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In that case a distinction was shown between untrue answers in regard to matters of opinion or judgment and those in regard to matters shown to have been within the knowledge of the applicant, and the court reached the conclusion that the former, if made in good faith and without intention to deceive, would not avoid the policy, but that the latter, if material to the risk, would defeat a recovery. But while the doctrine announced in that case would necessarily eliminate the question of the good faith and honesty of the assured as to untrue answers in regard to matters within his knowledge, it would not eliminate the question of his honesty and good faith as to the construction to be placed upon the questions propounded in the application. Every practitioner knows that it frequently happens that an apparently false answer is given to a question simply because the witness gathers a different meaning from the question than that his interrogator intended to convey. Hence, ordinarily, the first question that arises when the truthfulness of an answer is challenged is whether the party giving the answer understood the question. The assured is dead and is not here to explain why he answered as he did. The questions are not of his framing, but of the defendant's, thought out and elaborated in the quiet of an office, where every word was examined and carefully weighed. The assured was a farmer, and many of the words and the combinations in which they were used undoubtedly were new to him. Under such circumstances it is highly probable that the assured failed to grasp the true import of some of the questions. As the questions are made a part of the contract and were prepared by the defendant, they should be construed most strongly against it. *Connecticut Fire Ins. Co. v. Jeary*, 60 Neb. 338. And where any of such questions are so framed or placed that the assured may have honestly mistaken their true import, and gave answers thereto which are in fact untrue but true as he may have reasonably understood the questions, it is for the jury to say, we think, in the light of the entire transaction, whether in making his answers

he acted honestly and in good faith, and without intention to misrepresent or conceal any material fact.

Applying the foregoing rule to question numbered 14, and the answer thereto, which we repeat: "Have you within the last seven years been treated by or consulted any physician, or physicians, in regard to personal ailment?" "Yes." "If so, give dates, ailment and physician's or physicians' name and address." "1900. Dr. Alden. Grip."—in the first place it is somewhat involved, consisting in fact of five questions. It is followed by a space for an answer which is barely sufficient to give the name and address of one physician, ailment and date. We have already shown that the assured was ill from the latter part of 1899 until near the middle of the following summer, and that the illness apparently began with an attack of *la grippe*. His illness during that period was practically continuous, and it is not surprising that he should consider *la grippe* as the ailment from which he suffered during the whole period. However, in another part of the application, when asked whether he ever had jaundice, the assured referring to the same illness answered, "Yes." But the evidence shows that the assured, as well as some of his physicians, considered that during the whole period he was suffering from some of the consequences of the attack of *la grippe*. Dr. Alden was one of the physicians who attended him during that period, and was also the medical examiner of the local lodge who took the application. In his report on the examination of the assured for membership he made a somewhat extended statement in regard to the assured's answer that he had had jaundice. Taking into account the nature of the question, which might leave some doubt in the ordinary mind as to whether it called for the name of each physician who had attended the assured during the same spell of sickness, the limited space left for the answer, which is of itself a hint that the answer be brief, and that at the date of the application the assured was apparently in sound health, it is not an unreasonable inference that,

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in giving a general designation of the ailment with which he had been afflicted during that period, the date, and the name of an attending physician who could furnish information with respect to it, the assured honestly supposed that he had given all the information sought to be elicited, and had made a full and complete answer to the question. Besides, the defendant itself would seem to have inclined to that view because, while a subsequent answer showed that the assured had had jaundice, and the medical examiner forwarded a statement with respect to that answer with the application, the defendant with the knowledge of the fact before it that the answer to question 14 was not full and complete made no objection on that ground, but accepted the assured and issued the certificate. In view of all these facts and the circumstances surrounding the transaction we think it was for the jury to say whether the assured's answer to question 14 was made honestly and in good faith, and without any intention to deceive the defendant. Besides, courts have not been disposed to hold the assured to a high degree of strictness with respect to questions of this character. It is well settled that in answer to such questions the assured is not required to give the name of every physician he has consulted or every ailment for which he has been treated but may restrict his answer to serious ailments. *Blumenthal v. Berkshire Life Ins. Co.*, 134 Mich. 216, 96 N. W. 17, and cases cited.

In the next question: "Are you now of sound body, mind and health, and free from disease and injury, of good moral character and exemplary habits?"—the space left for the answer is barely sufficient for the word, "Yes." This clearly shows that the company required a categorical answer. The question itself shows that it called for the opinion of the applicant. The applicant at that time, so far as is disclosed by the evidence, may have been, or at least may reasonably have supposed himself to be, in good health and free from disease. The space left for his answer precludes the idea that it was intended that he should give a history of his past ailments. There is nothing in the

record that would warrant the court in holding that the answer was not given in good faith and according to the applicant's condition as he understood it at that time.

We come now to the last question: (21) "Have you been an inmate of an infirmary, sanitarium, retreat, asylum or hospital?" The space left for the answer to that question also indicates that the association required a categorical answer, and the answer is, "No." We have seen that the assured in 1900 was treated at the home or sanitarium of a certain physician for a period of about ten days. We have also seen that this place is sometimes referred to as the home of such physician and sometimes as his sanitarium. This physician testified that he had treated the assured in June, 1900, in the city of Norfolk, and, when asked at what particular place in that city, answered, "At my sanitarium at my home." When asked if he maintained a hospital or sanitarium in that city, he answered, "I did in the year 1901," the year following his treatment of the assured. Taking this evidence all together, we infer that at the time the assured was treated by this physician in Norfolk, the place where he was treated was not commonly known as a hospital or sanitarium, but merely as the doctor's private home where, in special cases, he received patients for treatment. And it is highly probable that the assured knew the place by the name by which it was commonly known and that he would have been surprised had he been told that by entering the doctor's private home for treatment he became an inmate of "an infirmary, sanitarium, retreat, asylum or hospital." The question immediately preceding the one under consideration, "Have you ever taken any treatment for tobacco, morphine, cocaine or opium habit?"—throws some light upon the construction which the assured placed upon the inquiry as to whether he had ever been an inmate of an infirmary, etc. It carries with it a suggestion of the popular conception of the institutions where such habits are commonly treated, which is entirely different from that of the private home of a physician where patients are occasionally received for

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treatment. We consider the evidence ample to warrant a finding that the assured's answer to the question under consideration was given in good faith and truthfully, as he understood the question. It is true the jury found specially that the place was a sanitarium, but that is a mere matter of a difference in definitions, and does not necessarily contradict the general finding that the assured's answers were given honestly, in good faith, and without any intention to deceive.

Complaint is made of the refusal of the court to give certain instructions tendered by the defendant, but as such instructions, each and all, conflict with the theory upon which the court submitted the case, and which, in our judgment, was the proper theory upon which to submit it, they require no extended notice at this time.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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CHARLES HERPOLSHIMER V. JOHN P. CHRISTOPHER.\*

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,028.

Contract: ABANDONMENT. A contract will be treated as abandoned, where the acts of one party, inconsistent with its existence, are acquiesced in by the other.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*Ricketts & Ricketts*, for plaintiff in error.

*George W. Berge*, contra.

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 355, *post*.

## JACKSON, C.

The plaintiff in error is the owner of a farm of 480 acres in Lancaster county. In November, 1901, he leased the premises to the defendant in error for the period of one year, commencing March 1, 1902. The lease was in writing and contained no covenants to put the defendant in error in possession, nor for the quiet enjoyment thereof. The rent was payable in cash at stated periods and promissory notes were given for the amount agreed upon. At that time another tenant was in possession under a written lease, terminating on the date at which the defendant's lease commenced. The tenant in possession refused to surrender the premises on the termination of his lease and the landlord instituted forcible detention proceedings and had judgment for possession on March 18, 1902. The tenant appealed to the district court, gave the statutory bond, and remained in possession, and thereupon the defendant in error on April 4, 1902, demanded a return of the notes given by him in payment of rent for the period covered by his lease. The notes were canceled and surrendered. On May 24, 1902, the forcible detention case was heard on appeal in the district court, where judgment was rendered by agreement in favor of the landlord, and thereafter the defendant in error sued the plaintiff in error for damages because of an alleged violation of the terms of his lease. His right to recover was based upon an allegation of the refusal of the landlord to give him possession of the premises at the beginning of his term, and the action so brought proceeded to trial upon that issue. At the close of the plaintiff's evidence the defendant moved for a directed verdict. Before a ruling on this motion, the plaintiff asked and procured leave of court to amend his petition. By the amended petition the right to recover was based upon an allegation of a prior outstanding lease to the tenant in possession. Issues were joined upon that allegation, plaintiff was permitted to reopen his case and introduced further evidence in support of that issue. The

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trial resulted in a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff, and the defendant prosecutes error.

Several questions are presented by the record, but the most important and controlling one, in our judgment, arises out of the acts of the defendant in error in demanding the return of his notes, and as a result the cancelation of his lease. Prior to the surrender of the notes some negotiations were had between the parties looking to a settlement of the controversy, and the defendant in error made some claim for damages, and his demands in that respect were discussed between defendant in error and a son of the plaintiff in error, with counsel. These negotiations, however, terminated in a peremptory demand for the return of the notes. Such demand and compliance amounted, in our judgment, to an abandonment of the contract by mutual consent. The provisions of the contract no longer remained in force, they could not be binding on one party unless they were equally binding on the other. The rule is that a contract will be treated as abandoned, where the acts of one party, inconsistent with its existence, are acquiesced in by the other. *Hall v. Eccles*, 46 Neb. 880. Certainly no right of possession to the leased premises thereafter existed in favor of the defendant in error, and in that behalf it is worthy of notice that a large portion of the demand for damages accrued after the abandonment of the contract, and the rule is that, in an action by a tenant against his landlord for an interruption of the tenant's right of possession, failure to prove that he had a continuous right of possession is fatal to the tenant's case. *Ives v. Williams*, 53 Mich. 636.

We are convinced that the judgment of the district court was wrong, and we recommend that the judgment be reversed and the cause remanded.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing

opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded.

**REVERSED.**

The following opinion on rehearing was filed March 21, 1907. *Judgment of reversal adhered to:*

1. **Lease: Covenant.** Ordinarily there is an implied covenant in a lease that the demised premises shall be open to entry by the lessee at the time fixed in the lease as the beginning of the term.
2. **The measure of damages** for a breach of this implied covenant is the difference between the rental value of the premises and the rent reserved in the lease. The lessee may also recover such special damages as he pleads and proves to have necessarily resulted from the breach of the agreement.
3. **Question for Jury.** Under the evidence in this case, *held* that the question whether the plaintiff rescinded the contract and abandoned the claim to damages should be submitted to the jury.

**LETTON, J.**

A brief statement of the facts in this case and of the proceedings at the trial is contained in the former opinion, *ante*, p. 352. The plaintiff began the action upon the theory that there was an implied covenant on the part of the lessor, Herpolsheimer, to put the lessee, Christopher, into possession of the demised premises when the term began, and that, since he was kept out of possession by a former tenant wrongfully holding over, he was entitled to recover damages for a breach of the implied covenant. The defendant contends that no such covenant is implied and that the lessor is not compelled to eject a wrong-doer for the benefit of the lessee; that it is the lessee's duty, if he desires possession, to procure it himself by virtue of the right granted him by the lease, and, hence, that no right of action for damages accrues for the failure of the lessor to put him into possession. During the trial, the court, upon a motion to instruct for defendant being made, apparently adopted the defendant's view of the law, but plaintiff asked leave to amend, and was

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permitted to amend, his petition so as to count upon a prior lease to Spelts, the tenant whom the defendant claimed was holding over, for the same term demised to plaintiff. A rescission of the contract by the plaintiff, in asking for and receiving his notes given for the rent, was pleaded as a defense, as well as a general denial. The court instructed the jury that it was not incumbent upon the landlord to put the tenant in possession as against a tenant holding over, but that, if it found that there was a prior and paramount lease made for the same term to Spelts by the defendant, then the plaintiff would be entitled to recover. It appeared from the evidence that Herpolsheimer brought and prosecuted to a successful determination a forcible entry and detainer suit against Spelts, and that Christopher was consulted about bringing the suit, and encouraged the prosecution of the same and was present at the trial. By another instruction the jury were told that the defense of rescission had not been established. The court also instructed with reference to the allowance of certain items of special damages based upon the plaintiff's contention that he had rented the farm for the special purpose of using it for stock raising and farming on a large scale and that upon the first of March he was compelled to move to his brother's farm, and from thence, about the first of April, to a farm which he purchased, and incurred extra expenses and damage by so doing.

We are convinced from an examination of the testimony and the instructions of the court that the jury could never have arrived at the verdict which they reached if they had followed the court's instructions, and that the verdict should be set aside and a new trial granted for that reason alone, unless the former opinion is correct in holding that the evidence clearly showed a rescission of the contract by the plaintiff and that, consequently, he had no cause of action. Upon this point, we are convinced that the question whether a rescission and abandonment of the contract by the plaintiff took place at

the time the notes were delivered to him is a question of fact which should have been submitted to the jury. If the intention of the plaintiff was to rescind the contract, abandon the lease and waive any claim for damages he might have, this would be a perfect defense, but if at the time he accepted the notes he did not waive or abandon his right to damages, but left the question open for settlement and negotiation, then the acceptance of his notes would not operate as an abandonment or rescission, but would merely go to reduce the amount of his recovery. There is evidence in the record of a claim for damages being made upon the defendant, together with a demand for the return of the notes and an acknowledgment by the defendant's attorneys of such a claim still being pending at the time of the surrender of the notes, sufficient, we think, to justify the submission of the question to the jury.

Since there must be a new trial, and since the question is one of first impression in this state, we think it proper at this time to determine which of the conflicting doctrines shall be adopted, as to whether or not there is an implied covenant in a lease by which a lessor agrees to put the lessee in possession, or to have the demised premises open for his possession on the day that the term begins. There is an irreconcilable conflict among the courts of this country upon this point. Perhaps the greater weight of authority is in line with the courts of New York, which hold that, if a lessee is prevented from taking possession of the demised premises by a tenant wrongfully holding over, it is not the duty of the landlord to oust the wrongdoer; that the right to possession at the end of the existing term is in the lessee, and not in the lessor, and that, when the landlord has given to the tenant the right to possession, he has done all that he is required to do as against third persons not claiming under prior and superior rights derived from him. This is the law in New York, New Hampshire, Maryland, Vermont, Illinois and Pennsylvania. *Gardner v. Keteltas*, 3

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Hill (N. Y.) 330; *Pendergast v. Young*, 21 N. H. 234; *Sigmund v. Howard Bank*, 29 Md. 324; *Underwood v. Birchard*, 47 Vt. 305; *Cozens v. Stevenson*, 5 Serg. & Rawle (Pa.) 421; *Gazzolo v. Chambers*, 73 Ill. 75. Jones, Landlord and Tenant, sec. 366, and note; 1 Taylor, Landlord and Tenant (9th ed.), sec. 305. The courts of England, however, and of Missouri, Alabama, Indiana, Michigan, Texas, California and Arkansas hold that there is an implied covenant that, when the time comes for the lessee to take possession according to the terms of his lease, the premises shall be open to him. That he is not liable for rent until he has been afforded an opportunity to enter, and that he is under no obligation to maintain an action against a tenant holding over to recover possession. Jones, Landlord and Tenant, sec. 367. In *Coe v. Clay*, 5 Bing. (Eng.) 440, the defendant had agreed to let the plaintiff certain premises, and this was an action for not letting him into possession by reason of a preceding tenant wrongfully holding over. The report states with commendable brevity: "The court were all clearly of opinion, that he who lets, agrees to give possession, and not merely to give a chance of a lawsuit"; and the verdict was upheld. See, also, *Jenks v. Edwards*, 11 Exch. (Eng.) \*775. There is an interesting discussion of this question in *King v. Reynolds*, 67 Ala. 229, in which the relative merits of the English and New York rule are considered, and the English rule adopted. The following are cases upholding this view: *Coe v. Clay*, 5 Bing. (Eng.) 440; *Jenks v. Edwards*, 11 Exch. (Eng.) 775; *L'Hussier v. Zallee*, 24 Mo. 13; *Hughes v. Hood*, 50 Mo. 350; *King v. Reynolds*, 67 Ala. 229; *Spencer v. Burton*, 5 Blackf. (Ind.) \*57; *Clark v. Butt*, 26 Ind. 236; *Vincent v. Defield*, 98 Mich. 84; *Hertzberg v. Beisenbach*, 64 Tex. 262; *Rice v. Whittemore*, 74 Cal. 619; *Rose v. Wynn*, 42 Ark. 257. We deem it unnecessary to enter into an extended discussion, since the reasons *pro* and *con* are fully given in the opinions of the several courts cited. We think, however, that the English rule is most in consonance with good conscience, sound

principle and fair dealing. Can it be supposed that the plaintiff in this case would have entered into the lease, if he had known at the time that he could not obtain possession on the first of March, but that he would be compelled to begin a lawsuit, await the law's delays and follow the case through its devious turnings to an end before he could hope to obtain posession of the land he had leased? Most assuredly not. It is unreasonable to suppose that a man would knowingly contract for a lawsuit, or take the chance of one. Whether or not a tenant in possession intends to hold over or assert a right to a future term may nearly always be known to the landlord, and is certainly much more apt to be within his knowledge than within that of the prospective tenant. Moreover, since in an action to recover possession against a tenant holding over the lessee would be compelled largely to rely upon the lessor's testimony in regard to the facts of the claim to hold over by the wrongdoer, it is more reasonable and proper to place the burden upon the person within whose knowledge the facts are most apt to lie. We are convinced therefore that the better reason lies with the courts following the English doctrine, and we therefore adopt it, and hold that, ordinarily, the lessor impliedly covenants with the lessee that the premises leased shall be open to entry by him at the time fixed in the lease as the beginning of the term.

Under the facts presented in this case, we think the court erred in submitting the question of whether there was a prior lease made by Herpolsheimer to Spelts under which Spelts claimed possession after March 1. The evidence shows that the plaintiff was an interested participant in the action for forcible entry and detainer against Spelts, although it was brought in Herpolsheimer's name, and that he was present at the trial, and we think that the successful result of that suit settled this issue as between Herpolsheimer and the plaintiff on the one side and Spelts upon the other. The instruction of the court upon this branch of the case, that the plaintiff, if the jury be-

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lieved he had been so active in the suit, would be estopped and concluded to allege and prove that Spelts held over under a lease paramount to the lease held by the plaintiff, properly stated the law, but the evidence upon this point was so clear as not to require its submission to the jury. This issue, for both the reasons given, should therefore be eliminated upon a new trial.

As we view the case, the issues to be tried are narrow. The fact that the lease was made, as alleged, is not disputed; neither is the fact that Herpolzheimer did not give Christopher the opportunity to take possession when his term commenced, and that Christopher, after it had become evident that it was impossible for him to obtain the place in time to farm during that year, obtained another farm, and demanded the return of his notes and damages for the breach of the contract. The only points necessary therefore to determine are: (1) Did the plaintiff rescind and abandon the contract and his claim for damages? (2) If not, what is the proper measure of damages to which he is entitled? In such a case, ordinarily, the measure of damages is the difference between the rental value of the premises and the rent that the plaintiff agreed to pay. By rental value is meant, not the probable loss of profits that might occur to the lessee, but the value, as ascertained by proof, of what the premises would rent for, or by evidence of other facts from which the fair rental value may be determined. But special damages may also be allowed if pleaded and proved. The plaintiff pleaded a number of items of special damages. The eighth and ninth instructions given by the court lay down the law correctly as to the plaintiff's right of recovery for damages and as to the measure thereof. We are inclined to the view, however, that some of the items of special damages which the plaintiff was allowed to prove at the trial were too remote to be considered, and that the inquiry should have been limited to the extra cost and expenses necessarily incurred by plaintiff in the removal to his brother's farm, and the extra cost of the care and

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maintenance of his family, and of his live stock, over what it would have been if he had obtained the defendant's farm as agreed; also, for the loss of his time during the period that he was awaiting the result of the suit against Spelts, and until he obtained another farm, since the evidence shows diligence on his part as soon as he found that Spelts had taken an appeal. 3 Sutherland, Damages (3d ed.), sec. 865; *Rose v. Wynn*, 42 Ark. 257; *Adair v. Bogle*, 20 Ia. 238; note to *Taylor v. Bradley* (39 N. Y. 129), 100 Am. Dec. 428.

Several other points are argued by defendant, but we do not think them of weight. We adhere to the judgment of reversal.

REVERSED.

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**WILLIAM VOGT v. W. H. BINDER, ADMINISTRATOR.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,219.

**Judgment: Revivor.** Proceedings to revive a judgment should not be had in the name of an administrator, except where the administrator has succeeded to the rights of the decedent.

**ERROR to the district court for Thurston county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. Reversed with directions.**

*C. L. Day and Thomas L. Sloan*, for plaintiff in error.

*J. M. Curry, contra.*

**JACKSON, C.**

In September, 1897, certain judgments were rendered before a justice of the peace in Thurston county against the plaintiff in error and in favor of one Hattenhauer. These judgments were afterwards assigned to Nick Fritz. Hattenhauer died in 1900, and after his death Fritz undertook to enforce collection of the judgments by execution. He was, however, perpetually enjoined from so doing until

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the judgments were revived, it having been held by this court that such procedure was necessary. *Vogt v. Daily*, 70 Neb. 812. Thereupon, Fritz procured a revivor of the judgments in the name of the administrator of Hattenhauer's estate. From the judgment of revivor the plaintiff in error prosecuted error to the district court, where the revivor was affirmed, and this proceeding is instituted to reverse the judgment of the district court.

The only question presented is the correctness of the judgment of revivor in the name of the administrator. It is contended that, because Fritz was the party in interest, the judgment should have been revived in his name. By section 45 of the code it is provided: "An action does not abate by the death, marriage, or other disability of a party or by the transfer of any interest therein, during its pendency, if the cause of action survive or continue. In the case of the marriage of a female party, the fact being suggested on the record, the husband may be made a party with his wife; and, in the case of the death or other disability of a party, the court may allow the action to continue by or against his representative or successor in interest. In case of any other transfer of interest, the action may be continued in the name of the original party, or the court may allow the person to whom the transfer is made, to be substituted in the action." This section has been several times construed, and it has been repeatedly held that the transfer of interest after the action is commenced does not prevent the action from being continued to final termination in the name of the original plaintiff. *Magemau v. Bell*, 13 Neb. 247; *Dodge v. Omaha & S. W. R. Co.*, 20 Neb. 276; *Harrington v. Connor*, 51 Neb. 214. If, therefore, the cause of action had been assigned to Fritz before judgment, the action might have proceeded to judgment in the name of Hattenhauer, and, had Hattenhauer been living at a time when it might have been necessary for his assignee to procure a revivor of the judgments, such proceeding might have been taken in his name, because a proceeding to revive a judgment is but a continuance of the

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action in which the judgment was obtained. 12 Am. & Eng. Ency. Law (1st ed.), 150<sup>h</sup>.

But the question here is whether such proceeding might be taken in the name of the administrator. By section 463 of the code it is provided: "Upon the death of the plaintiff in an action, it may be revived in the names of his representatives, to whom his right has passed. Where his right has passed to his personal representative, the revivor shall be in his name; where it has passed to his heirs or devisees, who could support the action if brought anew, the revivor may be in their names." This section of the code was under consideration in *Rakes v. Brown*, 34 Neb. 304, an action to quiet the title to real estate. Pending the action the plaintiff died, and the administrator, as the representative of the deceased, procured an order of revivor in his name, and it was in substance held that the administrator was not entitled to have the action revived in his name, because the title of the land passed directly to the heirs of the deceased, and there was no showing of a necessity to sell the real estate to pay the decedent's debts. As affecting the right to proceed in the name of the administrator, there seems to be no difference in principle between the case of *Rakes v. Brown*, *supra*, where there was involved a proceeding to revive before judgment, and the case at bar, where it is sought to revive after judgment. The assignee of the judgments had a right to proceed under the provisions of section 472 of the code to revive the judgments in his own name, but it does not seem to be the policy of the law to permit the office of an administrator to be used in revivor proceedings, except where he has succeeded to the rights of the decedent.

We conclude that the order of revivor in the name of the administrator was unauthorized, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded with instructions to enter judgment vacating the order of revivor and dismissing the revivor proceedings.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

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**By the Court:** For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to enter judgment vacating the order of revivor and dismissing the revivor proceedings.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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**ERNEST PEYCKE ET AL. V. EDGAR SHINN, ADMINISTRATOR.**

FILED APRIL 5, 1906. No. 14,266.

1. **Contract: CONSTRUCTION.** A contract for potatoes in car-load lots at an agreed price per bushel for all that may be loaded during the week, under which the seller has loaded and shipped four car-loads, is entire in the sense that either party had the right to a full performance.
2. **Agent's Authority: EVIDENCE.** The authority of an agent may be shown by the letters of his principal, and it is a sufficient foundation for the introduction of such letters in evidence to show that they were received in due course of mail in answer to letters written by the agent to the principal, and duly mailed to the address of the party sought to be bound.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Charles S. Elgutter, for plaintiffs in error.*

*Altschuler, Fleharty & Moriarty, contra.*

**JACKSON, C.**

This is the second appearance of this case. Our former opinion is reported in 68 Neb. 343. The facts necessary to be noticed are: That Peycke Brothers, of Omaha, had a branch house at Kansas City, and maintained a place of business both at Kansas City and Omaha. H. O'Berste was buying potatoes in Arkansas, and in the spring of 1898

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entered into an agreement with Peycke Brothers, of Omaha, to buy potatoes for them in car-load lots for an agreed compensation of \$10 a car. He was provided with funds from the Omaha office, and completed all purchases except the ones in suit, by payment of cash. The business was carried on entirely by correspondence through the mails and telegrams. Peycke Brothers informed him in advance of prices which he was authorized to pay, and shipments were made to the firm at Kansas City. On June 10, 1898, Peycke Brothers telegraphed O'Berste: "Mailing money Ozark tomorrow. Don't want onions. Looking for lower prices potatoes not above 50 for next week." On the 16th of that month O'Berste, while passing through Russellville, Arkansas, heard that potatoes were being loaded there, and, having 20 minutes at that station, he sought the dealer, J. L. Shinn, and contracted with him for potatoes at an agreed price of 50 cents a bushel for all that Shinn could load that week, and, as O'Berste was not to remain there, he directed Shinn to ship the potatoes to Peycke Brothers at Kansas City and draw on them for the purchase money. On June 14 Peycke Brothers, Omaha, telegraphed O'Berste: "Can use 10 cars this week's shipment at 40." This telegram was received by O'Berste on the 16th, after he had entered into the contract with Shinn, and it appears that he advised Shinn of the receipt of the telegram and wired him that the house would not confirm the order. Shinn, however, answered that it was too late, that two cars had already gone. Shinn loaded two more cars that week, but the bills of lading for the last two cars were not delivered until the following Monday. Sight drafts were attached to the bills of lading and forwarded to a bank in Kansas City for collection. The first two cars were received by Peycke Brothers and the drafts on them were paid. Upon the arrival of the last two cars, Peycke Brothers at Kansas City telegraphed Shinn: "We did not authorize you to draw for 50 cts. a bushel. Wire bank deliver us bills of lading quick." On the following day they telegraphed: "Potatoes too heavily loaded. Becoming

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heated. Must be sold quick. Wire bank deliver us bills of lading tonight so can place early morning trade." Upon receipt of the latter telegram, Shinn wired the Kansas City bank to release the bills of lading, the potatoes were turned over to Peycke Brothers, and the drafts returned unpaid to Shinn. The potatoes were sold, and Peycke Brothers remitted to Shinn the sum of \$134.94 as the proceeds of the sale, less charges and commission. Shinn credited that amount to Peycke Brothers, and sued that firm in Douglas county for the difference between the amount remitted and the contract price. While the suit was pending Shinn died, and the action was revived in the name of his administrator. The plaintiff had judgment for the full amount of his demand, and defendants prosecute error.

There are two principal contentions as to the merits of the controversy: First, as to the authority of O'Berste to bind his principal by an agreement to pay 50 cents a bushel at the time he entered into the contract; and, second, that the transaction relative to the last two cars amounted to a consignment on commission. Both of these contentions are untenable. At the time the contract was made, O'Berste had express authority from his principal to buy potatoes during that week for 50 cents a bushel. The contract was clearly within the scope of his authority as agent, with the single exception that he ordinarily paid cash; but the defendants were not prejudiced by this departure. The agent was supplied with the necessary funds to pay for the potatoes, and might have done so, had he chosen to remain at Russellville until the potatoes were loaded and weighed. The course pursued by him however, was one best adapted to the circumstances, and was ratified by his principal when the first two car-loads were received and the sight-drafts honored without question. Furthermore, payment of the drafts for the two latter cars was waived by Shinn, and Peycke Brothers received the potatoes knowing that they had not been paid for by their agent. There was involved no question of a lack of good faith, and the evidence discloses a complete accounting be-

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tween O'Berste and his principal, so there seems to be no reason why the contract should not be enforced.

It is urged, however, that Shinn knew, before the last two cars were shipped, that Peycke Brothers had revoked the authority of O'Berste to pay 50 cents a bushel for the potatoes. Such action, however, was too late, after the contract was made in good faith. In that connection, too, it is worthy of notice that there is involved in the issue no question of the difference in price between the price agreed upon and the one which the agent was authorized to pay in the telegram of June 14. Peycke Brothers treated the shipment, not as a sale, but as a consignment on commission, and they should not now be permitted to urge, after litigation has commenced, that their liability, in any event, was only for 40 cents a bushel. As to the claim that the last shipment should be treated as a consignment on commission, because of the fact that Shinn authorized delivery without payment, thus rendering the contract separable, such action on the part of Shinn could not have the effect contended for. The contract was still entire in the sense that either party had the right to full performance. *Williams v. Robb*, 104 Mich. 242, 62 N. W. 353.

The other questions urged relate to the admission and sufficiency of the evidence. It will be observed that the action was against Ernest Peycke and Julius Peycke, doing business under the firm name and style of Peycke Brothers, while the transaction was with Peycke Brothers, and it is said that no evidence is to be found in the record that Ernest Peycke and Julius Peycke were doing business under the name of Peycke Brothers. The correspondence, however, from Peycke Brothers was on printed letter-heads; the printed portion, in so far as it is material, is in this form:

"Ernest Peycke.

Julius Peycke.

Peycke Bros.,

Wholesale Brokerage and Commission,

Omaha, Neb.,

Des Moines, Ia.

Kansas City, Mo."

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It is evident that they thus held themselves out as doing business under the name of Peycke Brothers. No evidence was offered on their behalf, except the introduction of certain letters, which they procured to be introduced on the cross-examination of one of the plaintiff's witnesses, as will be hereafter noticed. The evidence afforded by their own letterheads, considered with other facts in the case, we think sufficient.

Again, it is urged that no foundation was laid for the introduction of the letters received by O'Berste from Peycke Brothers. In our former opinion (68 Neb. 343.), this question was the controlling one in the determination of the case, and it was held that no sufficient foundation was disclosed by the record. The first paragraph of the syllabus is as follows:

"Where it is sought to establish a contract by letters, there must be evidence tending to prove that they are in the handwriting of the defendant, or that they came from him or his authorized agent, or were received in due course of mail, in answer to letters duly mailed to the address of the party sought to be bound."

At the second trial we think the plaintiff was entirely within that rule. The testimony of O'Berste is direct and positive that the letters introduced were received in answer to letters from him addressed to Peycke Brothers at Omaha. Furthermore, the defendants produced on the cross-examination of O'Berste the identical letters written by him, had them identified, and they were offered and received as a part of the cross-examination. We entertain no doubt that the letters were properly received.

The only remaining question is as to the admissibility of the letters of administration. It is said that they were not properly authenticated, and that it was not shown that Jacob L. Shinn, therein named, was the J. L. Shinn of this action. It is not suggested wherein the letters are not properly authenticated. They are certified by the county clerk, *ex officio* clerk of the probate court, as well as by the judge of that court, under seal. There is also attached the

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certificate of the secretary of the state of Arkansas, under the seal of the state, that the officers so certifying are the officers which they represent themselves to be. The record does not contain the original pleadings, and we are not advised of whether the action was originally brought in the name of Jacob L. Shinn or J. L. Shinn, nor is the record of the revivor contained in the transcript, so that we are unable to determine whether there is any merit in the objection or not, and, with the record before us, we feel that the judgment should not be disturbed on that question alone.

We were not favored with a brief on behalf of the defendant in error, and are therefore ignorant of the views entertained by his counsel. We are satisfied, however, that the judgment is right, and recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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WINFIELD S. HADDIX V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,445.

1. **Jury: TALES MEN.** When the trial court finds that the regular panel of jurors will be exhausted, and that it will be necessary to call talesmen for the trial of a cause pending, it is proper to order the sheriff to call a specified number of talesmen for that purpose in anticipation of such failure of the regular panel. The fact that the sheriff called as such talesmen, pursuant to the order of court, persons having the qualifications of jurors, who had been, before the order was made, requested by the sheriff to attend court for that purpose, is not sufficient ground for challenge, unless it appears that the sheriff is interested in the cause, or there is some evidence to show that the sheriff acted from an improper motive.

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2. ——: **CHALLENGE.** Upon a trial for murder in the first degree, it is sufficient ground for challenge of a juror that he has such opinions as would preclude him from finding the accused guilty of an offense punishable with death.
3. **Evidence: OBJECTIONS.** Upon sustaining an objection to an offer of testimony, the court may allow part of the offered testimony without stating the reason for excluding the remainder.
4. **Remarks by the Court in the presence of the jury,** reflecting upon the evidence of an expert witness, will not be held prejudicial, if there is no evidence before the jury to render the expert evidence applicable to the issue being tried.
5. **Accused as Witness: IMPEACHMENT.** If the defendant testifies in his own behalf in a criminal case, he may be impeached as any other witness. If it is sought to show that he has made statements out of court inconsistent with his testimony, the statement supposed to have been made by the defendant, and to which his attention has been called while testifying, must be incorporated in the impeaching question, so that the question can be answered with yes or no by the impeaching witness.
6. **Criminal Law: TRIAL.** If it appears to the court that a juror, for any cause, has failed to hear the evidence given by a witness, the witness should be required to repeat his evidence or such part thereof as the juror has failed to hear. But, unless it clearly appears that the evidence or some part of it has not been heard by all the jurors, the court is not required, on its own motion, to cause the evidence to be repeated.
7. **Homicide: INSTRUCTIONS.** Upon the trial of an indictment charging murder in the first degree, the defendant may be convicted of a lesser degree of homicide, if the evidence warrants it. If the evidence is not sufficient to support a conviction of murder in the first degree, the jury should be so instructed. The court should submit to the jury those issues of fact upon which their finding, when made, would be allowed to stand as supported by the evidence. But, when the evidence is such as to make it proper to submit to the jury the question of the defendant's guilt of murder in the first degree, instructions submitting that question will not be erroneous because the jury found the defendant guilty in the second degree only.
8. ——: ——. When the defendant is found guilty of murder in the second degree only, prejudice will not be presumed because of several repetitions in the instructions of principles of law applicable to an issue of murder in the first degree, if the evidence was such as to justify the submission of both issues to the jury.

ERROR to the district court for Custer county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*H. M. Sullivan, A. R. Humphrey and Aaron Wall, for plaintiff in error.*

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson, contra.*

**SEDGWICK, C. J.**

This defendant was convicted of murder in the second degree in the district court for Custer county, and has brought the record of his conviction here for review upon petition in error. The bill of exceptions is a large one, and it shows that the evidence taken upon the trial in many matters of detail was conflicting. No contention, however, is made in the briefs that, if the issue was properly presented to the jury, the evidence is insufficient to support the conviction. The fact that the defendant shot and killed Melvin Butler, the deceased, was not contested upon the trial. Justification for the act was urged upon the theory of self defense. These two men were neighbors, their farms upon which they lived were separated only by the line between Custer and Sherman counties. There had been, prior to the homicide, some controversy between them, and evidently some bitterness of feeling toward each other, arising from various causes, among which was a dispute as to the right of the public to use a roadway which crossed the defendant's land. We would infer from the evidence that both men were in good standing in the community in which they lived; intelligent, vigorous men, jealous of their personal rights, and not much troubled with personal cowardice. Their contention and strife with each other, arising apparently from insufficient causes, and not justifiable on the part of either, have led to the death of one, and the conviction of the other for murder. It is seldom that this court is called upon to review the

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record of a homicide that presents more features of human interest than this. These men were not in the highest walks of life, but they seem to have been useful members of society; and each had a wife and family of young children who appear to have needed and enjoyed his care and protection. The trial court was evidently impressed with the importance of the case with which it had to deal, and manifested more than usual care to guard the interest of the state, and to thoroughly and impartially investigate the facts bearing upon the question of the defendant's guilt; and at the same time to protect the defendant in all of his rights, and safeguard him against an unjust conviction. After such a trial, the jury has found the defendant guilty. The homicide occurred in a personal conflict between the defendant and the deceased. It appears beyond any reasonable doubt that the defendant, armed with a shotgun, went to the place where the disputed road crossed his land, where he knew that the deceased with his young daughter and two other persons would probably attempt to pass. Whether the defendant then had it in his mind to punish the deceased for an affront which he supposed the deceased had recently given to the defendant's family was a disputed matter. It does not seem probable from all the circumstances of the case that such was his intention. It would seem more probable that he intended to prevent the deceased from crossing by the disputed road.

It was contended upon the trial that the defendant's purpose in going where he did was to look after and protect his young children, whom he expected to be returning home at that time. There is no doubt that the deceased's children were away from home, and that they might return by the way the defendant went, and it seems probable that the defendant may have supposed that he might meet them; but, however that may be, there is no doubt that the evidence justified the jury in finding that the defendant expected and intended to meet the deceased and to prevent his passing over the road in dispute. The deceased was armed with a pistol, as was also the young

man who accompanied him, and as soon as they arrived at the line of the defendant's land, the deceased and the defendant began shooting at each other. It would be difficult to determine from the evidence with certainty which party began the shooting, but the evidence shows, and the defendant admits, that he purposely shot the deceased, intending to kill him. This the defendant says it was necessary to do, and was done by him to save his own life. Under these conditions, and in the light of antecedent and surrounding circumstances, it was the peculiar province of the jury to determine the motives of the defendant, and to ascertain whether his action was prompted by anger and a desire for vengeance, or by the instinct of self-preservation, made necessary by conditions for which he was not responsible. This great and important duty seems to have been conscientiously performed by the jury. Defendant's counsel necessarily assumed that this verdict must not be disturbed, unless the defendant's rights have been neglected, or unwarranted burdens put upon him in the trial in some of the particulars of which they complain. The questions presented in the brief can be best considered in the light of the conditions to which attention has been called.

1. In the brief of the state, which was filed but a few days before the hearing, it was pointed out that the bill of exceptions was not properly identified. The attention of the court was called to the matter upon the argument by the defendant's attorneys, and leave was requested to withdraw the bill of exceptions for further identification. This being a prosecution for a felony, and the request to withdraw the bill of exceptions for further certification having been made at the first opportunity after attention was called to the defect by the brief of the state, leave was granted and the certification has been corrected accordingly.

2. It appears that, for causes not shown in the record, jurors had been excused so that but two remained of the regular panel. Several days before the session in which the defendant was tried, the sheriff notified sixty qualified

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residents of the county to appear at the ensuing session of the court to act as jurors. Afterwards, and before this case was called for trial, the court caused an order to be entered upon the record directing the sheriff to call sixty qualified jurors as talesmen for the trial of this case. When the case was called for trial, and the two jurors of the regular panel had been called, the court directed the sheriff to call other jurors, and he filled the panel from persons present in the courtroom, who had appeared there in pursuance of his former notice to them to so appear. These jurors were objected to by the defendant on the ground that they had not been properly summoned. The contention is that, when the sheriff directed these men to appear in court, no order had been made authorizing him so to do, and that his action was wholly unwarranted, and the same men having been called by him as jurors, the result was that the sheriff as a private individual, without authority from the court, selected the jurors to sit in the trial of this case.

It was held in *Pflueger v. State*, 46 Neb. 493, that the trial court may order the calling of talesmen before the regular panel is exhausted, when it appears that the regular panel will be exhausted, and that such talesmen will be necessary; but there is no provision in our law for the calling of such talesman by the sheriff without authority from the court. His action, therefore, in notifying these men to appear in court before any order had been made directing him so to do was extra official, and would have no force or effect in qualifying these men to act as jurors. When, however, he was directed by the court to call talesmen, it was his duty to exercise his discretion in selecting qualified electors of the county. His action in calling these talesmen from the number of those men who were already in the courtroom, pursuant to his unauthorized notification, would not disqualify them as jurors, unless irregularity in first notifying them to appear, without authority for so doing, should be held to raise the presumption that the defendant was, or might have been, prejudiced thereby. In as early a case as *Burley v. State*, 1 Neb. 385, it was held

that jurors must be selected in the manner prescribed by law, and, in case they were not so selected, it was "not material whether any injustice was thereby suffered by the prisoner," and it has frequently since been held that, if any rule of the law is violated in the selection of a jury, prejudice to the defendant will be presumed. In this case, however, it does not appear that any provision of the statute was violated. It was not the duty of the sheriff to call individuals as jurors before he had been ordered so to do by the court; and it may be that slight circumstances tending to show that the sheriff was interested or partial in the case, or that the defendant was in any manner prejudiced by this action of the sheriff, might require the court to exclude jurors so chosen. But we find no such circumstances in this record. There is nothing to indicate that the sheriff had any personal interest whatever in the prosecution, or that the defendant suffered, or could have suffered, any prejudice from the sheriff's action in the matter. We think, therefore, that the court did right in refusing to interfere with the discretion of the sheriff in calling talesmen in compliance with its order.

3. It appeared upon the *voir dire* examination that some of the jurors called had conscientious scruples against the infliction of the death penalty, and for this reason they were excused by the court. It has frequently been held that the trial court must exercise its discretion in such matters, and that if it appears from the examination of the jurors that it is probable that a juror may, under the influence of his conscientious scruples, unduly hesitate in determining the facts which might lead to the infliction of the death penalty, disapproved by the conscience of the juror, such juror should be excused. *Bradshaw v. State*, 17 Neb. 147; *Hill v. State*, 42 Neb. 503; *Dinsmore v. State*, 61 Neb. 418; *Rhea v. State*, 63 Neb. 461. The language of the statute is: "In indictments for an offense the punishment whereof is capital, that his opinions are such as to preclude him from finding the accused guilty of an offense punishable with death" shall be good cause for challenge. Cr. code,

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sec. 468. It is manifest that it was not intended by the legislature that jurors, otherwise qualified, should be excluded from this service because of sentimental feelings against the infliction of such punishment, nor because, even, of fixed opinions that such penalties are not justifiable upon moral grounds, unless it appears that the juror is so prejudiced against such penalties as to "preclude him from finding the accused guilty," and it may be that this statute has in some cases been too liberally applied. The question, however, presented in this record is whether, under any circumstances, any conviction or prejudice of the juror, however strong, even if it would preclude the infliction of the death penalty, should be ground for challenge. It is conceded in the argument that, when the statute provided no other punishment for murder in the first degree than the death penalty, the exclusion of a juror under such circumstances was required. The contention is that, since the change in the statute leaving it to the discretion of the jury whether the death penalty should be inflicted in each particular case, the statute allowing this ground of challenge has no application. This contention is predicated upon the theory that the discretion of the jury in this regard is an absolute discretion and that in all cases the juror may, without other reason than his personal feelings in the matter, reject the death penalty and inflict imprisonment only as the punishment for murder. This does not seem to be the theory of the law. No doubt the tendency of modern legislation is toward less severe penalties; and many thoughtful and earnest minds are impressed with the belief that the taking of human life is in no case justifiable; but this idea has not been embodied in the laws of this state. The theory of our law is that there are instances in which the infliction of the death penalty is not only justifiable, but demanded. The change in the statute which requires the jury to exercise its discretion in the matter implies that in some instances life imprisonment is an adequate penalty even for murder in the first degree. The discretion of the jury, therefore, will be controlled by the circumstances of

the particular case, and not by the whim of the individual juror. A juror, then, who has such opinions as to preclude him from inflicting the death penalty in any case, necessarily is of opinion that our law is wrong, and is not, therefore, qualified to administer it. The amendment of the statute in question was made in 1893, and since that time *Hill v. State, supra*, was decided, and in that case it was declared that "the provision of the criminal code making conscientious scruples of a juror against capital punishment ground of challenge for cause in prosecutions for murder was not repealed by the amendment of 1893, conferring upon the jury discretion to fix the punishment, upon conviction for murder in the first degree, at imprisonment for life instead of the death penalty." The later cases follow the same rule.

4. A young son of the defendant was called as a witness in his behalf, and testified that sometime in the month before the homicide, as he was going home from a ball game, and was not far from the farm of the deceased, he was frightened by the deceased. The substance of the conduct of the deceased on that occasion was told by the witness in this language: "He just called at me three times and whistled, he called the first time and I stopped, and then I started to run, and he called twice and whistled at me." The witness then ran home and was not further interfered with. Upon the redirect examination, the witness was asked why he was afraid of him. This was objected to as calling for a conclusion of the witness, and the objection was sustained. The defendant then made an offer of proof by the witness, the substance of which was that the witness believed at the time that the deceased desired to punish him for taking down a fence of the deceased and not replacing it. The ruling of the court upon the offer was to the effect that the defendant might show the facts in regard to taking down the fence by the witness and replacing it by the deceased; but the court refused to allow the witness to testify that it was for this reason that he was afraid that the deceased intended to injure him. There was, of

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course, no error in this ruling of the court, and the defendant's exceptions thereto were properly overruled. It is, however, insisted that, although it should be thought that the exclusion of the evidence as offered was not erroneous, still the language used by the court was prejudicial to the defendant as containing an intimation "that the witness had been guilty of reprehensible conduct toward the deceased." The language said to have been used by the court was: "The offer is denied, except to this extent that the witness may be permitted to testify, if counsel desire him to, that he had passed along near there the day before and had kicked down the fence which Butler had put up." The acts of the witness recited by the court were recited in the defendant's offer of proof, and the objection made is that the court failed to call attention to the mitigating circumstances that would justify the witness in taking down the fence of the deceased. But these matters were not competent in evidence, and it would seem to have been improper for the court to have recited them.

5. Two of the state's witnesses testified to having heard the defendant shout to the deceased and the parties with him in threatening language on the evening of, and shortly before, the homicide. These witnesses were at the time at their home, which was possibly half a mile or more from the residence of the defendant, near which he is alleged to have been at the time. On the theory that there was an elevation of ground between the witnesses and the defendant that might intercept the sound of the defendant's voice, the defendant offered a witness as an expert who testified, in substance, that such obstruction would interfere with the passing of sound from one place to another, and would, in the opinion of the witness, render it impossible for the sound of the defendant's voice to have been heard as testified to by the state's witnesses. The defendant alleges that, while this expert was testifying, the court, in passing upon a question raised upon the evidence, used these words in the hearing of the jury: "A country boy on a hill can tell more about how sound travels, or how far

you can hear a voice, than the philosophers who have written books on the subject." It is manifest that such language from the court would be improper and might, if the evidence offered was material to the issue, be prejudicial to the defendant. It is denied that the court used such language. If such language had been used by the court, it would, of course, be of no importance in the case, except as reflecting upon the weight to be given the evidence offered by the expert witness; and in this case it could not have been prejudicial because, as far as we can see, the evidence of the expert has no relevancy to the question being tried. We have been unable to find, and our attention has not been called to, any clear and substantial evidence from which the jury could have found that there was any elevation of land between the defendant and the witnesses that could have obstructed or deflected the sound of the defendant's voice. It is shown that the defendant's house was situated upon low land; that between his residence and the home of the witnesses the surface of the earth is very uneven; that a deep canyon or draw extends through the territory, and that there are elevations of ground that some might call hills and others would not, but to what extent the ground is elevated is not shown. It appears uncontradicted in the evidence that the home of the witnesses is situated on an elevated plateau; that this elevation is greater than that of any of the ground between the two residences; how much greater is not shown, but one witness testified that there was no elevation of ground between them that would prevent the witnesses hearing sound that came from the vicinity of defendant's residence. The expert witness in question had no knowledge of the physical features of the territory between the two residences. A finding that there was an elevation that would interfere with a direct line from one of these residences to the other would be based upon guesswork, and not upon the evidence in this record. The evidence of the expert, therefore, had no bearing upon the issue and might have been wholly excluded. It follows that the defendant could

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not have been prejudiced by the supposed remarks of the trial court.

6. Testimony was offered for the purpose of impeaching the evidence of the defendant who was sworn as a witness in his own behalf. The defendant had testified to the circumstances surrounding the homicide and, among other things, had stated that the controversy did not arise from the dispute as to the alleged road over the defendant's land, but that, on the other hand, he had started out from his home to look after his children, and accidentally came in contact with deceased. A witness was called who had been with the defendant soon after the homicide, and had conversation with him, and, after showing these facts, this witness was asked this question: "Did the defendant tell you on the car that night, coming from Mason City, words like these: 'That he had some trouble with this man over a road; that he went down to the gate with a gun, and that he killed him; that he went to open the gate to go through, and that he killed him; that Butler went to open the gate?'" This question was clearly objectionable, for several reasons. The exact words which it was claimed that the defendant had used should have been incorporated in the question propounded to the witness, and the question, having been put to the witness so indefinitely as it was, naturally called for the indefinite and wholly improper answer of the witness: "Well, that is about the substance of it." Past experience in the trial of such questions has led to the conclusion, which has long ago become an unvarying rule, that such mode of impeachment, being dangerous and liable to lead to prejudice, should not be allowed, except with the strict observance of the technical rules with which the law has protected a witness whose testimony it is sought in this manner to impeach. When, however, it is sought to enforce these technical rules against the party offering the evidence, it is necessary likewise to lay the same restrictions upon the objector. The objection made to this question was: "Defendant objects for the reason that the question suggests a confession or

admission, and that the same is a part of the state's main case, and is not proper rebuttal testimony; that no foundation was laid for the introduction of the testimony when the defendant was on the stand." It will be noticed that no objection was made to the form of the question. The defendant having consented to the use of so indefinite a question, it cannot be said that he was prejudiced by an answer, the indefiniteness and indirectness of which was suggested by, and the natural result of, the question itself. There was, therefore, no error in refusing to strike out the answer of the witness on the ground that it was not responsive, and incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial. The evidence, if offered as a part of the state's case, would, of course, have been competent as an admission of the defendant against his interest; but, in the condition of the evidence at the time, it would have been manifestly unjust to the defendant to have admitted the evidence as affirmative proof of the defendant's guilt, and, so far as it might have been thought to have been offered for that purpose, the objection sufficiently raises the question and should have been sustained.

7. While the testimony was being taken in the case, defendant's counsel suggested to the court that one of the jurors was asleep. The court, thereupon, sent the sheriff to awaken the juror. The juror appeared at the time to have his eyes closed and head bowed, but, as the sheriff reached the juror, and before he had been interfered with by the sheriff in any way, he resumed his attentive position, and no further action was taken by the court thereon. The defendant now insists that, although he did not request the court so to do, the court should of its own motion have questioned the juror, and, if it appeared that the juror had failed to hear any part of the evidence that had been given, the court should have caused the evidence to have been reintroduced; but this contention cannot be sustained. The proof offered by the defendant upon this matter is somewhat contradicted, but, even if we take it as true, it does not sufficiently appear that the

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juror failed to hear the evidence given by the witness, and, if he did, the defendant could not by his silence acquiesce in the continuance of the trial without further action on the part of the court, and afterwards urge that he was prejudiced by the want of such action. It follows that this assignment in the motion for new trial was properly overruled.

8. It is earnestly contended that the court erred in those instructions in which the elements of murder in the first degree were explained to the jury. There were four of these instructions, and possibly a part of some of them might properly have been omitted. It is not contended that they contained any erroneous statement as to the law, nor is it denied that the evidence was in such condition as to make it proper to submit that question to the jury. The argument seems to be that, since the jury have found the defendant guilty of murder in the second degree, thereby excluding the conclusion of his guilt of the higher degree, it follows that the instructions defining murder in the first degree were unnecessary, or at least that some of them, or some part of them, might have been dispensed with. Of course, there is no merit in such a contention, and possibly it was not intended to insist upon this suggestion. The principal contention appears to be that there was "practically a reiteration and repetition of the first instruction given upon that point." The instructions as a whole present an unusually clear explanation of the principles of law underlying the questions of fact to be submitted to the jury, and we cannot find any such repetition in the statement of these principles as could be said to prejudice the defendant.

It appears that the whole matter was fairly submitted to the jury, and without any prejudicial error that would require a reversal of the judgment.

AFFIRMED.

**WILLIAM MILLER V. ELI HENDERSON ET AL.****FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,275.**

**Costs.** When a plaintiff in an action in a justice's court, in which no set-off is pleaded, recovers a judgment from which the defendant appeals, and the plaintiff has judgment also in the district court, he is entitled to recover costs in the latter court without regard to the amount of his judgment therein.

**ERROR to the district court for Antelope county: JOHN F. BOYD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

**O. A. Williams, for plaintiff in error.**

**A. E. Garten, contra.**

**AMES, C.**

In a money action, plaintiff recovered a judgment in justice's court from which the defendant appealed. On a trial in the district court the plaintiff also recovered a verdict, but by a sum less by more than \$20 than the amount of the judgment appealed from. In the latter court judgment was rendered for the plaintiff for the amount of the verdict, and for costs. From the order taxing costs the defendant prosecutes this proceeding.

We discover no error. The right of a litigant in a common law action to recover costs is exclusively statutory. *City of Hastings v. Mills*, 50 Neb. 842. Section 620 of the code enacts: "Where it is not otherwise provided by this and other statutes, costs shall be allowed of course to the plaintiff, upon a judgment in his favor, in actions for the recovery of money only, or for the recovery of specific real or personal property." Section 986 of the code provides: "If, on an appeal by the plaintiff, from a judgment in his favor, he shall not recover a larger sum than twenty dollars exclusive of interest since the rendition of the judgment before the justice, he shall be adjudged to pay all costs in the district court including a fee of five dollars to the de-

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fendant's attorney; and in case the defendant shall demand a set-off greater than twenty dollars, and he appeals from a judgment in his favor, and does not recover twenty dollars, he shall, in like manner, pay all costs in the appellate court, including a like fee to the plaintiff's attorney." And section 1,013 is as follows: "If any person appealing from a judgment rendered in his favor shall not recover a greater sum than the amount for which judgment was rendered, besides costs and the interest accruing thereon, every such appellant shall pay the costs of such appeal." Each of these two latter quoted statutes constitutes an exception to the first quoted, but neither is applicable in the present case because the plaintiff, who was successful in justice's court, did not appeal, and no set-off was pleaded. We have been cited to no other statute bearing on the question and know of none, and therefore recommend that judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

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AMANDA PRINGLE v. MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA.\*

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,294.

1. **Beneficial Associations: FORFEITURE: WAIVER.** It is a settled law of this state that if a beneficiary insurance association, like the defendant in error in this action, continues to collect dues and mortuary assessments from a member who has forfeited his beneficiary certificate, after knowledge of such forfeiture by its officers or agents intrusted with the duty of making assessments, it shall be held to have waived such forfeiture, without regard to any restrictions or limitations incorporated in its certificates of membership or by-laws with respect to the power or authority of such persons to make such waivers.

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 388, *post*.

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2. **Principal and Agent.** It is the duty of an agent to communicate to his principal every fact affecting the transaction intrusted to his care which comes to his knowledge in course of or during its performance, and this duty, in an action between the principal and the adverse party, the agent is, with certain exceptions noted in the opinion, conclusively presumed to have obeyed.

**ERROR** to the district court for Deuel county: **HANSON M. GRIMES, JUDGE.** *Reversed.*

*G. C. McAllister*, for plaintiff in error.

*W. H. Thompson and T. S. Allen*, contra.

**AMES, C.**

There is no conflict in the evidence with respect to the facts essential to the determination of the rights of the parties to this action which was tried by the court alone, a jury having been waived.

Frank W. Pringle was a member of the defendant society holding a beneficiary certificate in favor of his mother, the plaintiff, which contained a clause to the effect that it shall become null and void if, while such a member, he should become convicted of a felony. While such member he was convicted of a felony, in consequence of which he was sentenced to serve a term in the Nebraska state penitentiary, where he died about six months afterwards. After Pringle had been arrested for the offense of which he was subsequently convicted, but before his trial, he deposited with the clerk of the local camp a sum of money sufficient to pay his dues and assessments, thereafter to accrue, for the term of four months, and directed the clerk so to apply it as such obligations should mature. This direction the clerk obeyed by remitting the required sums monthly to the head camp; such remittances being made all, or nearly all, of them after the conviction and with the knowledge by the clerk of that fact. After the fund had become exhausted, the plaintiff paid to the clerk two successive instalments which were received and trans-

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mitted by him to the head camp in the usual manner. Pringle died on the 6th day of September, without ever having been in default of dues, or assessments, and a member in good standing, so far as appeared from the books and records of the order, and was buried by, and with the rites and ceremonies of, the local camp as having died in full fellowship therewith. After his death an officer or agent of the head camp made or attempted to make a tender to the plaintiff of the sums accepted as dues and assessments after the date of conviction. The evidence with respect to what occurred in this transaction and as to the formal sufficiency of the attempted tender, is somewhat conflicting, but, in our view of the matter, the fact is not material. A suit on the membership certificate resulted in a judgment for the defendant.

In our opinion, the case is ruled by *Modern Woodmen of America v. Colman*, 64 Neb. 162. It was there held, and it was twice reaffirmed in the same case, that "it is a settled law of this state that if a beneficiary insurance association, like the plaintiff in error in this action, continues to collect dues and mortuary assessments from a member who has forfeited his beneficiary certificate, after knowledge of such forfeiture by its officers or agents intrusted with the duty of making assessments, it shall be held to have waived such forfeiture, without regard to any restrictions or limitations incorporated in its certificates of membership or by-laws with respect to the power or authority of such persons to make such waivers." And it is said in the opinion: "It cannot be regarded as material upon what ground or for what reason such forfeiture was incurred." *Field v. National Council, K. L. S.*, 64 Neb. 226, and *Royal Highlanders v. Scovill*, 66 Neb. 213, both cited and chiefly relied upon by the plaintiff in error herein, are not in conflict with the principles above quoted. In the former of these cases the officer of the local body, charged with collection of dues and mortuary assessments, had undertaken by agreement with the insured to extend the time within which payment of them

should be made, and the latter relying upon such agreement had died several months in arrears. It was correctly held that the local official had no authority to waive or amend the by-laws of the association or the contract of the parties. In the latter of the cases cited the insured, a woman, was in suspension for default of overdue payments, and the contract stipulated that she could not be reinstated unless when in good health. The husband persuaded the local officer to accept the delinquent dues on the day of her death, concealing from him the fact of her mortal illness and dying condition, and the payment was repudiated as soon as the fact became known. There is no question as to the correctness of these decisions, but the cases are as unlike the one at present under discussion as can well be imagined. There is a plain distinction between the cases cited and the *Colman* case and the one at bar, which is not always observed by counsel or even by the courts. It is not held in any of them that the agent has authority to waive a forfeiture or any condition of the policy or contract. But as is shown at some length in *Hargadine, McKettrick Dry Goods Co. v. Krug*, 2 Neb. (Unof.) 52, it is the duty of an agent to communicate to his principal every fact affecting the transaction intrusted to his care which comes to his knowledge in the course of or during its performance, and this duty, in an action between the principal and the adverse party, the agent is conclusively presumed to have obeyed, except when, in extreme cases, it is shown that the agent, with the knowledge of the opposite party, has repudiated his agency or has acted fraudulently under such circumstances as to apprise the latter that the communication has not been, and probably will not be, made, or it is the intent of the latter that it shall not be made, or he is in some way implicated with the default of the agent. There are no circumstances in this record bringing the case within the exceptions. There is no evidence that the insured or his beneficiary acted fraudulently or in confederation with the local agent, or suspected, or had reason so to do, that

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he would neglect his duty in any respect. In the absence of this exception the presumption is that the clerk of the camp seasonably communicated the fact of Pringle's conviction to the head camp and that the latter, by accepting and retaining the money without objection until after the death of the insured, waived the forfeiture. This, which is the doctrine of *Modern Woodmen of America v. Colman, supra*, and the cases there cited, and of a long line of other cases in this court, is accurately applicable to the case at bar, and requires that the judgment of the district court be reversed and a new trial granted, which we recommend be done.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and a new trial granted.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed July 12, 1907. *Judgment of reversal adhered to:*

1. **Beneficial Associations: AGENTS.** A subordinate lodge of a mutual benefit society and its clerk, who is designated by the supreme lodge to receive and forward dues and assessments from certificate holders, are agents of the supreme lodge.
2. **Forfeiture: WAIVER.** The collection of dues and assessments from a member of the order, convicted of a felony, by the clerk of such subordinate lodge, with full knowledge of that fact, which are forwarded to and retained by the supreme lodge until after the death of the member, amounts to a waiver of a forfeiture of his benefit certificate on the ground of such conviction.

BARNES, J.

For a full statement of the facts involved in this controversy, see our former opinion, *ante*, p. 384, where we held that the forfeiture relied on to defeat a recovery on the benefit certificate in suit was waived. A rehearing was allowed, and it is now strenuously contended that the

acts of the local camp and its clerk did not have that effect. It is claimed that the forfeiture clause contained in the by-laws of the association was self-acting, and when the deceased member was convicted of a felony it *ex proprio vigore* expelled him, and he was no longer a member of the order. This may be conceded, and yet there may be a recovery in this case. The association had the power to waive the forfeiture, retain the member, and continue his benefit certificate in force. And so the real question for determination is, has there been such a waiver?

It appears that Frank W. Pringle became a member of the defendant association in May, 1900, and the benefit certificate in question was issued and delivered to him on the 30th day of June, of that year. He paid all of his dues and assessments up to and including the 15th day of April, 1901, when he was convicted of a felony. He was, up to that time, a member of the association in good standing, and, desiring to continue so and keep his certificate in force for the benefit of his mother, he, together with the clerk of his local camp, examined the by-laws of the order for the year of 1897, which were then in the hands of that officer and were the only by-laws to which they had access, but found nothing therein to prevent him from keeping up his payments and retaining his membership. He thereupon deposited with the clerk a sum of money sufficient to pay his dues and assessments for some months, with instructions to forward the same to the head camp as required. When the money so left with the clerk was exhausted, the beneficiary was notified of that fact, and she thereafter continued to make the necessary payments until after Pringle's death, which occurred on the 6th day of September, 1901. It further appears that he was buried under the auspices of the order by the local camp, with full knowledge on the part of the members thereof of the foregoing facts. Thereafter proofs of death were forwarded to the head camp, with a demand for the payment of the benefit certificate, which was refused, for the reason that the deceased was not a member of the order.

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at the time of his death. An attempt was made to return the amount paid to the association by the deceased and his beneficiary after his conviction, but she refused to receive or retain the money thus tendered.

That the clerk of the local camp who, as shown by the record, was authorized to collect dues and assessments and forward them to the head camp was the agent of the association is too well settled by authority to be now an open question. *Bragaw v. Supreme Lodge, K. L. H.*, 128 N. Car. 354, 54 L. R. A. 602; *Trotter v. Grand Lodge of Iowa, L. H.*, 132 Ia. 513; *Coverdale v. Royal Arcanum*, 193 Ill. 91; *Supreme Tent, K. M. W., v. Volkert*, 25 Ind. App. 627; *Wagner v. Supreme Lodge, K. L. H.*, 128 Mich. 660; *Stylop v. Wisconsin O. F. M. L. Ins. Co.*, 69 Wis. 224; *Knights of Pythias v. Kalinski*, 163 U. S. 289. It is also well settled that such local camp or lodge of such an organization is the agent of its governing body. *Coverdale v. Royal Arcanum, supra*. The local camp and its clerk being the agents of the association, the conclusive presumption, in the absence of fraud, is that they seasonably communicated the fact of Pringle's conviction to the head camp. Indeed, the clerk testified that the governing body knew of that fact, and his statement stands unchallenged, except by the evidence of one C. W. Hawes, the head clerk of the association. A like state of facts has often been held to amount to a waiver of a similar forfeiture clause. In *Supreme Lodge, K. H., v. Davis*, 26 Colo. 252, it was held that a benevolent association which issues a benefit certificate to a member on condition that he is under a certain age waives the right to make an objection on this point by acceptance of assessments after knowledge that the member was above the age stated when the certificate was issued; that subordinate lodges and their officers who collect assessments for, and which are accepted by, the supreme lodge are agents of such governing body, and notice to such agents will be deemed notice to their principals.

*Supreme Tent, K. M. W., v. Volkert, supra*, was a case

where the by-laws of the association, which were a part of the contract of insurance between it and its members, provided that if a member should engage in the sale of intoxicating liquors his certificate should become void from the date of engaging in such occupation, without any action on the part of the officers of the society, and that the receipt of assessments from such member after his engaging in a prohibited occupation should not be a waiver of the condition. The assured engaged in the business of selling intoxicating liquors, which fact was known to the local authorities to whom he paid his dues, and the society retained and received the last assessment, with notice of the fact that the member died while engaged in the prohibited occupation. It was held that the association was estopped from asserting that the certificate was forfeited.

In *Alexander v. Grand Lodge, A. O. U. W.*, 119 Ia., 519, it was said: "One asserting the right to pay under a valid certificate, and allowed to do so by the officer having authority to determine whether or not such payments should be received, is certainly justified in relying on the statement of such officer, and the association is estopped from insisting by way of defense on any fact which would have been a proper ground for refusing, when the dues are offered, to recognize the certificate as valid, provided such fact is known to the association through such officer, or there is such notice of the fact as to charge the association or its officers with knowledge thereof."

In *Trotter v. Grand Lodge of Iowa, L. H.*, *supra*, it was held that the rule that courts will give effect to any act or circumstance from which it may fairly be argued that the insurer has waived the right to strict and literal performance by the insured, or upon which an estoppel against forfeiture may be founded, applies to fraternal or lodge insurance. And whether a waiver of forfeiture of a certificate of insurance will be found in any particular case depends not on the intention of the insurer against whom it is asserted, but on the effect which its conduct or course

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of business has had upon the insured, and this rule is applicable where the insurer acts under a mistake.

In *Modern Woodmen of America v. Colman*, 68 Neb. 660, we held that a forfeiture incurred by the holder of a life insurance policy or contract is waived, if the company, with knowledge of the facts, subsequently collects premiums, dues or assessments on account of the contract, and retains them, without objection, until after the death of the insured; that it is the duty of the agent to make known to his principal all facts concerning the service in which he is engaged that come to his knowledge in the course of his employment, and this duty he is, in a subsequent action between his principal and a third person, conclusively presumed to have performed. This is the foundation of the rule, necessary to public safety, that notice to an agent in the course of his employment is notice to his principal.

It is contended, however, that, Pringle's membership having terminated by reason of his conviction and the forfeiture clause contained in the by-laws of the association, the clerk of the local camp was not, as to him, the agent of the head camp, and had no authority to receive dues from him after the date of his conviction. It appears, however, that the head camp had failed to furnish the clerk with the by-laws of the order adopted in 1899, or thereafter, which contained the forfeiture clause in question. So, when the deceased applied to the agent of the association to ascertain whether he could pay his dues and assessments, and keep his benefit certificate in force, it was found, on examination of the by-laws, that he could do so. Again, Pringle's conviction did not have the effect of removing the clerk of the local camp from office, and he was as much the agent of the association thereafter as he was before that event took place. He was required to collect all dues and assessments from members of the local camp and forward them to the association, and, finding nothing in the by-laws furnished him by that body which prohibited it, he decided, in good faith, that he was required to receive the

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dues and assessments tendered by the deceased and his beneficiary. They were so received by him and forwarded to the head camp, which received and retained them until after Pringle's death. The clerk of the local camp was thus acting as agent for the association, with at least ostensible authority to accept the dues and assessments in question, and his acts should be held to be binding upon his principal. It also appears that the local camp received its part of the dues paid by the deceased; continued to treat him as one of its members, and has never offered to return any of the money thus received. It would, therefore, seem clear that the forfeiture relied on by the defendant has been waived, and this rule is amply sustained by the authorities.

So, we are of opinion that our former judgment was right, and it is adhered to.

**REVERSED.**

**LETTON, J., dissenting.**

Frank W. Pringle became a member of the order upon June 23, 1900. At the time he became a member he agreed "to conform in all respects to the rules, laws and usages of the society now in force or which may hereafter be enacted and adopted by the same, and that this application and the laws of this society shall form the sole basis of my admission to membership therein and of the benefit certificate to be issued me." There was a further agreement that if he should be expelled from the order he should forfeit his rights under the certificate. In his application he states: "I fully understand the object, organization, mode of action and laws of this society, and particularly that part of the laws defining the qualifications for and the restrictions upon its membership. \* \* \* I further understand and agree that the laws of this society now in force enter into and become a part of every contract of indemnity by and between the members of the society and govern all rights thereunder." These statements were a

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part of the application and were signed by the applicant, together with the further signed agreement that the application and statements should be taken as a part of the contract. At the time of his admission into the order section 326 of the by-laws provided as follows: "If any person after becoming a member of this society shall be convicted of a felony, he shall by such conviction be expelled from the society, without any action being taken by the local camp, executive counsel, head camp or any of the officers of this society." And section 328 provided: "In case of expulsion because of conviction of a felony, the member shall never again be reinstated." Section 274 provided, in substance, that the camp clerk should not knowingly receive dues "from a member who shall have been convicted of a felony after his adoption into this society, provided, however, that the receipt, retention or transmission to the head camp of such dues or assessments shall not have the effect of waiving the forfeiture of the certificate of such member or secure to him any such rights whatever." There is no evidence in the record showing that at the time Pringle became a member of the order he did not fully understand and know the contents of the by-laws and the foregoing provisions and his signed declaration is to the effect that he was so informed. In April, 1901, he was convicted of horse stealing, and died in the penitentiary in September, 1901. In July, 1901, and after the date at which the local clerk testifies Pringle and he examined the by-laws, a new by-law was adopted as section 248, revision of 1901, as follows: "No local camp nor any of the officers thereof shall have the right or power to waive any of the provisions of the by-laws of this society."

1. In the absence of any evidence to contradict Pringle's statement that he knew what the by-laws were in 1900 when he joined the order, I do not think the testimony of the clerk that, about the time of the conviction he examined his 1897 copy of the by-laws and found nothing to prevent him from accepting the dues, is of much importance. Both he and Pringle evidently had some rea-

son for looking up the by-laws in that respect. No reason is suggested why he should think of such a law being in existence, unless he had at some time been informed of it, and I think the inference to be drawn from this fact supports the statement in Pringle's application that he knew what the by-laws were. Pringle knew when he entered into the contract that if he was convicted of a felony his certificate would be void. He knew also that the clerk had no right or authority to take money from him in payment of dues or assessments after that event. By a subsequent by-law which was binding upon him, the power of the clerk to waive any of the provisions of the contract or waive a forfeiture was expressly taken away. The collection of the assessments by the local clerk therefore was beyond the scope of his authority, which was known to the insured, and which, in the absence of ratification by his principal, did not bind it. If the evidence preponderated that the head camp knew of the forfeiture and accepted the money with that knowledge, I would concur in the opinion, but I do not so read the record. This was the condition in *Supreme Tent, K. M. W. v. Volkert*, 25 Ind. App. 627, referred to in the opinion, and with this doctrine I have no quarrel. There is no evidence of ratification of the unauthorized act. The money sent in by the clerk was returned immediately upon knowledge of the facts, and the forfeiture was never waived. These views are supported by *Farmers & Merchants Ins. Co. v. Dodge*, 78 Neb. —; *Graves v. Modern Woodmen of America*, 85 Minn. 396; *Field v. National Council, K. L. S.*, 64 Neb. 226; *Royal Highlanders v. Scovill*, 66 Neb. 213; *Elder v. Grand Lodge*, A. O. U. W., 79 Minn. 468; *Knights of Honor v. Oeters*, 95 Va. 610; *Borgraefe v. Knights of Honor*, 22 Mo. App. 127; *Harvey v. Grand Lodge*, A. O. U. W., 50 Mo. App. 472; *Hall v. Western Travelers Accident Ass'n*, 69 Neb. 601. I think it would be extremely dangerous to the welfare of all the members of beneficial associations if the power is indirectly conferred upon local clerks to change or annul the terms of the contract, as seems to be the ef-

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*Missouri P. R. Co. v. Cass County.*

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fect of the opinion. We have held that this cannot be done to the detriment of the member by a body made up of the officers of the lodge and some elected representatives. *Lange v. Royal Highlanders*, 75 Neb. 196. If this cannot be done by the formal action of such a body, is it consistent or logical to say that it may be done by any local camp clerk? Moreover, the organization possesses social and fraternal, as well as insurance features, and its members are associated together in the work of the local camp. Most law-abiding citizens have a just and well-founded aversion to social association with criminals, and the provisions of the contract which seek to protect them from such association should be given full force and effect, and the unauthorized act of a subordinate agent should not deprive the other members of the protection proposed by this by-law. It is probable also that by reason of an increased mortality in prisons the insurance risk is increased as long as the criminal is incarcerated, and the society has the right to protect itself and its members from such an increase of the hazard caused by the act of the insured.

The by-law is salutary, is in the interests of the whole membership of the association, and should be enforced, unless waiver by the principal is shown.

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#### MISSOURI PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY V. CASS COUNTY.

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,240.

1. **Railroads: CROSSINGS AT HIGHWAYS.** Under section 110, ch. 78, Comp. St., it is the duty of a railroad company to make and keep in repair suitable crossings with approaches, notwithstanding the highway was laid out after the railroad was built. The public authorities are required to build that part of the highway within the right of way which they would have been required to make had the railroad not been constructed. *State v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, 29 Neb. 412, followed and approved.

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2. ——: ——: **LIABILITY OF COUNTIES.** Under the provisions of this section of the statute, a railroad company cannot recover damages from a county for the cost of putting in cattle-guards, erecting sign-posts, building wing-fences, planking the track, and constructing the necessary approaches at a public crossing.
3. **Compensatory damages** should be allowed for the land taken from the right of way for a public road.
4. **Measure of Damages.** Where, in making the proper approaches to the railroad track, it is necessary to grade through all, or nearly all, the width of the right of way on either side of the track, the railroad company should be allowed such sum for damages as the county would have been compelled to expend in grading the public road had the railroad never been built.

**ERROR to the district court for Cass county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Reversed.***

*B. P. Waggener, J. W. Orr and A. N. Sullivan*, for plaintiff in error.

*Jesse L. Root and C. A. Rawls, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This action originated before the board of county commissioners of Cass county on a claim for damages filed by the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company on account of the crossing of its right of way by a section line road in said county. There is no question involved as to the regularity of the proceedings in opening the highway, and plaintiff's claim for damages was duly filed in conformity with the statute. Appraisers, duly appointed, awarded plaintiff the sum of \$250 as compensation for the crossing of the road over its right of way. The county board, however, refused to allow plaintiff any damages, and an appeal from this final order was prosecuted to the district court for Cass county. A jury was waived and trial had to the court, with a finding and judgment for the plaintiff for one cent damages. To reverse this judgment plaintiff brings error to this court.

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It appears from the testimony that there is a natural depression of the surface of the ground at the point where the section line road crosses plaintiff's right of way, and that the railroad track had been graded about 15 feet above the surface of the surrounding lands. The claims urged by the railroad company are for the cost of grading from the railroad track to the highway within the right of way, for the expense of putting in cattle-guards, wing-fences and sign-posts, for planking the track, and also for the amount of land taken from the right of way by the condemnation proceedings, being a strip containing about four-tenths of an acre. There was testimony offered tending to show that the value of land at the place of the crossing was from \$65 to \$75 an acre. The contest was as to whether or not plaintiff was entitled to recover for these items of damage under the laws of this state.

Plaintiff contends that all the items of damage claimed are extra burdens cast upon it by the opening of the public road across its right of way long after the establishment of its roadbed. Plaintiff relies on section 6, art. XI, of the constitution, which provides that "the exercise of the power and the right of eminent domain shall never be so construed or abridged as to prevent the taking by the legislature, of the property and franchises of incorporated companies already organized, or hereafter to be organized, and subjecting them to the public necessity the same as of individuals," and urges that under this section the property of corporations is put in the same class as the property of individuals so far as condemnation proceedings are concerned, and can only be taken for public purposes for a just compensation. On the contrary, it is contended by the county that the plaintiff corporation took its franchise subject to the dominant right of eminent domain in the state and subject to such burdens as the state might impose upon it in the reasonable exercise of its power of police regulation of railroad and other corporations; that such regulation is defined by section 110, ch. 78, Comp. St. 1905, which is as follows: "Any railroad corporation,

canal company, mill owner, or any person or persons who now own, or who may hereafter own or operate, any railroad, canal, or ditch that crosses any public or private road shall make and keep in good repair good and sufficient crossings on all such roads, including all the grading, bridges, ditches, and culverts that may be necessary, within their right of way."

That statutes imposing conditions similar to those contained in this section have been almost universally upheld by state courts of last resort, as well as by the supreme court of the United States, is now beyond question. This identical section of the statute was before this court in the case of *State v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, 29 Neb. 412, and was there declared to be a constitutional enactment that applied as well to roads constructed after the railroad track had been laid as to those in existence at the time of its construction. The doctrine of this case is in harmony with the great weight of authority, and we see no reason at this time to depart from it. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. City of Chicago*, 166 U. S. 226, 17 Sup. Ct. Rep. 581; *New York & N. E. R. Co.'s Appeal*, 62 Conn. 527, affirmed as *New York & N. E. R. Co. v. Bristol*, 151 U. S. 556, 14 Sup. Ct. Rep. 431; *Lake Shore & M. S. R. Co. v. Sharpe*, 38 Ohio St. 150; *Baltimore & O. R. Co. v. State*, 65 N. E. (Ind.) 508; *Chicago, M. & St. P. R. Co. v. City of Milwaukee*, 97 Wis. 418.

In *State v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co., supra*, referring to the provisions of the statute above quoted, it is said: "Under that act it is the duty of a railroad company to make and keep in repair suitable crossings with approaches, notwithstanding the highway was laid out after the railroad was built. The public authorities are required to build that part of the highway within the right of way which they would have been required to make had the railroad not been constructed.

The authorities are in nowise uniform in the conclusions reached as to the particular items of damage which should or should not fall within the provisions of the statute.

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The weight of authority, however, is that under statutes similar to our own such items of damage as are necessitated and occasioned by the operation of the railroad, as the erection of sign-posts, the construction of wing-fences and cattle-guards, and the building of approaches from the public road to the railroad track, are within the clear letter of the statute and must be borne by the railroad company without compensation. With reference to the costs that necessarily would have been expended by the public in making the highway, had the railroad never been constructed, the opinions are divergent; but, as the exercise of the police power under this section of the statute frequently casts onerous burdens on public service corporations, and as the doctrine announced by this court, when the statute was first interpreted, is supported by the authority therein quoted (*People v. Lake Shore & M. S. R. Co.*, 52 Mich. 277) and, though a deviation from the letter, is in harmony with the spirit of the enactment, we see no reason for changing the rule which has long been acquiesced in. Applying these principles to the items of damage claimed in the case at bar the trial court was clearly right in excluding from the estimate the cost of putting in cattle-guards, building wing-fences, and constructing necessary approaches from the highway to the track. We think, however, that for the land condemned within the plaintiff's right of way for public use there should have been compensatory and not mere nominal damages awarded. It matters not whether the right of the plaintiff in the land was a mere easement or a fee simple title. It had acquired its right by its own condemnation proceedings and was entitled to the uninterrupted use and enjoyment of the right of way, subject only, as all property is, to the right of eminent domain; and, when even a small portion of the land composing its right of way is taken from it and dedicated to another and different public use, actual and not nominal damages should be allowed.

With reference to the claim for the entire cost of grad-

ing within the right of way, it would seem from the principles announced in *State v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co., supra*, that the company should have been allowed damages only for so much of the grading and filling across its right of way as would have been necessary had no railroad ever been constructed at the place of the crossing. There is evidence introduced by the county, some of which tends to show that the cost of opening and maintaining the road at this point would have been trivial had there been no railroad grade. Other testimony, however, tends to show that it would have been necessary to do some grading and to put in either a culvert at the place of crossing the track or a bridge a little further west, which would have cost the public not to exceed \$100 as testified to by one of defendant's witnesses. Whatever the evidence shows would have been the necessary cost of constructing the public road at that place, had the railroad never been built, should be allowed the plaintiff on a retrial of this cause.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings under this opinion.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings under this opinion.

**REVERSED.**

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Farley v. Weiss.

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**JOHN W. FARLEY v. JOHN WEISS, JR.**

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,273.

1. **Vendor and Purchaser:** FRAUD. Every contracting party has an absolute right to rely on the express statement of an existing fact, the truth of which is known to the opposite party, and unknown to him, as a basis of a mutual agreement.
2. Instructions examined, and held not prejudicial.

ERROR to the district court for Boone county: JAMES R. HANNA, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*W. W. Thompson and H. C. Vail*, for plaintiff in error.

*J. S. Armstrong and A. E. Garten*, contra.

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an action instituted by the plaintiff in the court below against the defendant for damages for fraud and deceit alleged to have been perpetrated upon plaintiff by defendant by misrepresentations as to the character, quality, improvement, and value of a forty-acre tract of land situated in Garfield county, Colorado, which was deeded to plaintiff by defendant at the agreed price of \$1,200 in part payment for a one-half interest in a stock of merchandise situated in Cedar Rapids, Nebraska, which plaintiff traded to defendant. The petition alleged that plaintiff was without any knowledge of the value, character or improvement on the land; that defendant falsely represented that the land contained improvements in the nature of a house and outbuildings and that nine acres of the land were in alfalfa and under irrigation, and that the land was of the reasonable value of \$1,200; that defendant had been on the land, and had personally examined it and knew the condition thereof; that plaintiff, relying on these representations, accepted the land without making any further investigation as to its value, character, or im-

provements; that the representations as to the improvements and character of the land were false; and that the land, in fact, was not worth to exceed \$50. Defendant admitted the transfer of the land at the agreed price of \$1,200, but alleged that he warned plaintiff at the time of the trade that he (the defendant) knew but very little about the land, and that what he told him as to the improvements and value were based on information that he (the defendant) had received from third parties, and not on his own knowledge. Defendant also alleged that he warned plaintiff that he had better examine the land before accepting it, but that the plaintiff, being anxious to close the deal, accepted the deed without making any further investigation as to the character and value of the land. On issues thus joined, there was a trial to the court and jury, a verdict for the plaintiff for \$1,150, judgment on the verdict; and to reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

It is conceded in the brief filed on behalf of the defendant that the testimony as to the alleged fraudulent representations of the land, while in sharp conflict, is sufficient to sustain the judgment, and the only alleged error in the proceedings, for which a reversal of the judgment is asked is the giving of paragraph eight of instructions by the court on its own motion. This instruction is as follows: "You are instructed that if you believe from the evidence that the real estate in question was purchased on the personal representations of the defendant, and such representations were false as to value and improvements, and the plaintiff did not know the land, and had no opportunity to examine it and was prevented from examining the property or making inquiries as to its condition or value by a trick or fraud of defendant, the measure of damages that the plaintiff is entitled to recover is the difference in value between the land as represented and as it actually is." It is apparent that this instruction, construed with other instructions given, is correct and in harmony with the holdings of this court in *McKnight v. Thompson*, 39 Neb. 752;

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*Hoock v. Bowman*, 42 Neb. 80; *Stochl v. Caley*, 48 Neb. 786, but the contention is that so much of the instruction as submitted the question of plaintiff having been prevented by trick or fraud of defendant from making other inquiries or examination of the land himself is wholly unsupported by the evidence, and should not, for that reason, have been given for the consideration of the jury. This instruction was given in connection with others requested by the defendant, which told the jury in substance that, if defendant told plaintiff that the representations as to the land were only such as he had learned from others and were not based on his own personal information, then the jury should find the issues for the defendant. It is without dispute in the testimony that defendant had made a personal examination of the land before the trade was entered into, and that plaintiff had never seen the land, which was located in another state and at a considerable distance from the place where the trade was made. Plaintiff rested his cause on alleged misrepresentations made by defendant as to facts within the knowledge of the defendant, and wholly unknown to plaintiff. The court, having given defendant's theory of the transaction to the jury in instructions, which were not complained of, was fully justified, as we deem it, in presenting plaintiff's theory in the instruction complained of. In *Meade v. Bunn*, 32 N. Y. 275, it is said:

"The omission, by one of the parties to an agreement, to make inquiries as to the truth of facts stated by the other, cannot be imputed to him as negligence. Every contracting party has an absolute right to rely on the express statement of an existing fact, the truth of which is known to the opposite party, and unknown to him, as the basis of a mutual agreement."

The doctrine announced in this case has been quoted with approval by this court in the case of *Hoock v. Bowman*, *supra*, and, we think, correctly states the law. It is beyond dispute from the testimony in the case at bar that defendant had, or should have had, personal knowledge of the character and improvement of the land which he traded

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to plaintiff. It is also clear from the testimony that the defendant knew at the time of the trade that plaintiff had no knowledge, or opportunity of knowing, as to these facts. And as to whether defendant made the statements on his own knowledge or on mere representations of third parties was submitted to the jury in the instructions above referred to. Hence it seems to us to have been proper to fully submit plaintiff's theory, a part of which was that he was prevented from making a further investigation as to the nature and improvement of the land because of his reliance on the misstatement of facts communicated to him by the defendant.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**MORRIS MEYER v. OMAHA FURNITURE & CARPET COMPANY.**

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,270.

1. **Replevin: PARTIES: SUBSTITUTION.** In a replevin suit, where the plaintiff has taken the property, it is error to permit a stranger to be substituted for the original plaintiff. *Flanders v. Lyon & Healy*, 51 Neb. 102, followed and approved.
2. **Statute: CONSTRUCTION.** The provisions of section 24 of the code are special in their character, to be strictly construed, and the prescribed mode of procedure must be closely followed. *Church v. Callihan & Co.*, 49 Neb. 542, followed and approved.
3. **Petition: CAPACITY TO SUE: DEMURRER.** An objection to a petition in which the requirements of section 24 of the code are not strictly followed, in alleging plaintiff's capacity to sue, can be raised by a demurrer which sets forth that the petition fails to show that plaintiff has the legal capacity to sue.

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ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WILLIAM A. REDICK, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*W. S. Shoemaker*, for plaintiff in error.

*G. W. Shields*, *contra*.

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an action in replevin instituted by the Omaha Furniture & Carpet Company against Morris Meyer and others before a justice of the peace in Douglas county, Nebraska. The affidavit alleged that the plaintiff was the owner and entitled to immediate possession of certain chattels by virtue of a lease executed by one of the defendants, Mrs. J. C. McCandless. The writ was issued under this affidavit, and the property was taken and turned over to the Omaha Furniture & Carpet Company as provided by law. But one of the defendants, Morris Meyer, appeared before the magistrate. This defendant claimed a special property in the chattels replevied, under a mortgage executed to him by Mrs. McCandless. At the trial in the magistrate's court, it was shown by the testimony of Henry J. Abrahams that there was no corporation, partnership, or associations of persons doing business in the state of Nebraska under the name and style of Omaha Furniture & Carpet Company, and that the business was owned and controlled by Henry J. Abrahams. Plaintiff's attorney asked to have Abrahams made a party to the action. This request was denied by the magistrate, and judgment was rendered in favor of the defendant Meyer for the amount of his special property in the chattels replevied. An appeal was taken from this judgment by the Omaha Furniture & Carpet Company to the district court, where plaintiff filed a petition in which it alleged that plaintiff "is an unincorporated institution wherein Henry J. Abrahams is the proprietor, doing business under the said name of Omaha Furniture & Carpet Company," and that "the plaintiff is the owner of the following described

goods and chattels, to wit," (describing the goods replevied in the justice's court). The petition then set out the lease and the breach of the conditions thereof, under which the plaintiff claims title and the right to immediate possession of the goods replevied. Defendant filed a motion to strike this petition from the files, because it shows on its face that plaintiff was not the real party in interest. On this motion being overruled, defendant was given leave to demur instanter, and he did so, alleging as grounds for demurrer that plaintiff had no legal capacity to sue; that the petition showed upon its face that it was not prosecuted in the name of the real party in interest, and that the petition failed to state a cause of action against the defendant. This demurrer was overruled, and a judgment entered in favor of the plaintiff. To reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

There is nothing in the affidavit on which the writ of replevin was issued to show that Abrahams was in anywise connected with the Omaha Furniture & Carpet Company, and it was held by this court, in the well-considered case of *Flanders v. Lyon & Healey*, 51 Neb. 102, that "in a replevin suit, where the plaintiff has taken the property, it is error to permit a stranger to be substituted for the original plaintiff over defendant's objection." When the cause was removed by appeal to the district court, plaintiff did not ask leave to substitute Abrahams as the plaintiff in the cause of action, but, on the contrary, filed a petition in which he plainly attempted to state facts sufficient to show the authority of the Omaha Furniture & Carpet Company to maintain the action in its own name. The allegations with reference to the business and organization of the company have already been set out and the question is whether or not these allegations, taken as true, are sufficient to show its right to maintain this action. The right of the plaintiff to amend his petition to correct any error in his pleadings or process is not questioned, but whether or not the amendment, when made, was sufficient to show plaintiff's right to maintain the action is the vital question.

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Section 24 of the code provides as follows: "Any company or association of persons formed for the purpose of carrying on any trade or business, or for the purpose of holding any species of property in this state, and not incorporated, may sue and be sued by such usual name as such company, partnership, or association may have assumed to itself or be known by, and it shall not be necessary in such case to set forth in the process or pleading, or to prove at the trial, the names of the persons composing such company." This section of the statute has been interpreted by this court, and we have held that its provisions are special in their character, to be strictly construed, and the prescribed mode of procedure must be closely followed. *Church v. Callihan & Co.*, 49 Neb. 542. *Burlington & M.R.R. Co. v. Dick & Son*, 7 Neb. 242. We have also held that an objection to a petition in which the requirements of this section were not strictly followed, in alleging the capacity to sue, might be raised by a demurrer, which sets forth that the petition did not show that the plaintiff had the legal capacity to sue. *Sanborn & Follett v. Hale*, 12 Neb. 318. Now, it is plain from a reading of the petition that it does not follow the requirements of section 24 of the code, in that it does not allege that plaintiff is a company or association of persons formed for the purpose of carrying on any trade or business, or for the purpose of holding any species of property in this state. We are therefore of opinion that the court erred in overruling defendant's demurrer, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

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Quinn v. Eggleston.

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## GEORGE E. QUINN V. MARY EDITH EGGLESTON.

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,286.

**Bastardy: Evidence: Variance: Instruction: Review.** Where there is a variance between the testimony of the complaining witness given at the preliminary and her testimony at the trial in a bastardy proceeding, if the defendant requests the court to instruct the jury on this variance as affecting the credibility of the complainant, it is error to refuse such instruction.

ERROR to the district court for Franklin county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*Dorsey & McGrew, for plaintiff in error.*

*G. W. Prather, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was a bastardy proceeding instituted by Mary Edith Eggleston against defendant, George E. Quinn, in which she charged the defendant with being the putative father of a bastard child born to her on October 1, 1904. There was a trial of the issues to the court and jury, with a verdict of guilty, judgment on the verdict; and to reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

The first allegation of error called to our attention in the brief of defendant is that there is not sufficient evidence to support the judgment. An examination of the testimony contained in the bill of exceptions convinces us that there is sufficient competent evidence to sustain the verdict, and that the trial court did not err in refusing to direct a verdict for defendant when the testimony was all in.

The only question urged in the brief that we think challenges serious consideration was the refusal of the trial court to instruct the jury, at defendant's request, as follows: "You are instructed that if you find from the evidence that plaintiff made statements at her examination before the county judge differing from her testimony given

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before you at this trial, you have the right to consider such evidence as evidence tending to impeach the truth of plaintiff's testimony." In *Stoltenberg v. State*, 75 Neb. 631, on complaint of Dorothy Kruse, the question of defendant's right to have the provisions of section 5, ch. 37, Comp. St. 1903, given in instruction to the jury, when requested, was before this court and considered in a carefully prepared opinion by LETTON, C., and it was held error to refuse to instruct in accordance with any of these provisions, when any such instruction was requested and was applicable to the testimony offered. In the case at bar, the child was born on the 1st day of October, 1904. At the preliminary examination, the complainant gave different dates at which she claimed to have had sexual intercourse with the defendant in the months of October and November, 1903, but gave no date of intercourse in the month of December following. At the trial in the district court, the complaining witness testified to having intercourse with defendant about the 23d of December, 1903. While it is true, as contended by counsel for the complainant, that the fact of intercourse in December is not necessarily contradictory of anything testified to at the preliminary examination, yet there is a substantial difference between the testimony given at the preliminary and at the trial. In view of this fact, we think that, under the doctrine announced by this court in *Stoltenberg v. State*, *supra*, the court should have given the instruction requested, or one of similar import. As we view it, where there is material variance between the testimony given at the preliminary and the testimony given at the trial in a bastardy proceeding, if the defendant requests the court to instruct the jury on this variance as affecting the credibility of the complainant, it is error to refuse such instruction.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

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Continental Trust Co. v. Peterson.

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By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

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**CONTINENTAL TRUST COMPANY, ADMINISTRATOR, APPELLANT, v. SOREN T. PETERSON, APPELLEE.\***

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,475.

1. **Interlocutory Order: APPEAL.** An order setting aside a judgment under the provisions of section 602 of the code is an interlocutory and not a final order, and cannot be reviewed by this court on appeal.
2. **Corporation as Administrator.** A corporation cannot act as an administrator of the estate of a deceased person under the laws of this state.

**APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
ABRAHAM L. SUTTON, JUDGE. Dismissed.**

*H. P. Leavitt, for appellant.*

*J. O. Detweiler, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

On February 16, 1893, Francis E. Reisdorph procured a judgment in the district court for Douglas county against Soren T. Peterson, appellee in the present cause of action, for the sum of \$1,500. The case was taken to this court on error proceeding, and the judgment of the district court was affirmed on December 23, 1896. Thereupon, David Van Etten, who was of counsel for plaintiff Reisdorph, filed an attorney's lien upon the judgment for the sum of \$1,150. Reisdorph, the judgment plaintiff, had removed from the state of Nebraska to the territory of Oklahoma

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 417, *post*.

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before his judgment was affirmed by this court. On February 12, 1897, Van Etten filed his petition in the district court for Douglas county against Reisdorph, asking judgment for the amount of his lien and interest. With this petition he filed an affidavit for an order of attachment on the ground of nonresidence, and attempted to procure service by publication on defendant Reisdorph, and also had a summons in garnishment served on appellee Peterson, the judgment debtor. An answer was filed in this suit for, and signed by, Francis E. Reisdorph, and attorney Van Etten took judgment for the amount of his claim and interest. Here the matter rested for some time. On July 1, 1902, Francis E. Reisdorph departed this life in the territory of Oklahoma. On September 15, 1902, Van Etten caused an execution to issue on his judgment against Reisdorph, which was returned unsatisfied. On September 19, 1902, he filed an affidavit for garnishment in aid of execution and had summons served on appellee Peterson, as garnishee. Peterson answered, suggesting the death of Reisdorph and denying the validity of the garnishment proceedings. Judgment was rendered, however, against the garnishee, and he was adjudged to pay into court the sum of \$2,060.77, and certain costs. Thereafter, an execution was issued on this judgment and levied on certain property of appellee Peterson. Pending objections to a confirmation of the sale of the property so levied upon, Peterson settled the judgment with Van Etten and received a receipt for the full amount of the judgment. On July 16, 1904, the Continental Trust Company, appellant herein, filed a motion for a revivor of the judgment of Reisdorph against Peterson, alleging that it had been appointed administrator of the estate of Francis E. Reisdorph, deceased, by the county court of Douglas county, Nebraska, and that no part of the judgment had ever been paid. On this motion an order was entered reviving the judgment, unless Peterson should show cause to the contrary before August 15, 1904; and it was directed that notice of the motion and conditional order of revivor be served upon Peterson. The

sheriff of Douglas county served the notice of this motion and conditional order of revivor personally on Peterson, who, however, failed to appear on the 15th of August, when the order was made final. Thereafter, an execution was issued on the judgment and levied on the real estate of the appellee Peterson. On November 26, 1904, at a succeeding term of the district court, appellee Peterson filed a motion to have the execution, which was issued on the order of revivor, recalled, and to set aside the final order of revivor and to have an accounting. This motion was sustained in so far as to set aside that part of the order of revivor that attempted to find that the garnishment proceeding against Peterson was null and void and of no effect, and that he was entitled to no credit on the judgment for the money he had paid to Van Etten. The execution was recalled, and Peterson was given permission to answer in the revivor proceedings. From this order the Continental Trust Company has appealed to this court.

The various contentions urged under this most peculiarly complicated record may be summarized as follows: Appellant contends that its right to sue as an administrator is not subject to collateral attack; that the order of revivor was a final order, which could not be set aside or modified on motion after the term; that the answer alleged to have been filed by Reisdorph in the suit against him by Van Etten in the attachment proceeding was a forgery, and that the garnishment proceeding based on this judgment was a nullity and constituted no defense as a payment of the Reisdorph judgment.

On the contrary appellee contends that the plaintiff below, being a corporation, could not, under the laws of this state, be appointed as administrator of the estate of Reisdorph, and that the order of the county court making this appointment was *coram non judice* and conferred no right on plaintiff to maintain the action, and that the order of the district court setting aside and modifying its former judgment in the revivor proceeding, which order was appealed from, was properly entered under subdivision 3

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of section 602 of the code, and that the order was interlocutory and not final in its nature. He further denies that the answer filed by Reisdorph was a forgery, and contends that, even if the garnishment proceeding in aid of the execution on the judgment was irregular, Peterson is subrogated by his payment of the judgment to Van Etten to all the rights Van Etten would have had against the estate, and that, in any event, he is entitled to whatever lien Van Etten had against the judgment for attorney's fees, and that this lien attached to and inured in the judgment from the date of its filing, and that the judgment can now only be revived subject to this lien.

At the threshold of a discussion of the varied questions involved in the controversy we are confronted by the proposition that the order of the court setting aside its former judgment under the provisions of section 602 of the code has been held by this court in numerous recent cases to be a mere interlocutory order, and not subject to review on appeal or error in this court. *Rose v. Dempster Mill Mfg. Co.*, 69 Neb. 27; *Browne v. Croft*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 133; *Merle & Heaney Mfg. Co. v. Wallace*, 48 Neb. 886.

For this reason alone we might dismiss this appeal and leave some other vexatious questions involved in the case for a subsequent review, if the case should reach this court again. But, as a dismissal of the appeal would leave the cause on the docket of the district court for Douglas county for further proceedings on the action to revive the judgment, we think it not improper to determine at this time at least one of the issues that contending counsel have urged with ability and zeal. It is necessary for the future conduct of the case to determine whether or not, under the laws of this state, a corporation can be appointed administrator of the estate of a deceased person. At common law a corporation could not act as an executor or administrator for the reason, given by Blackstone, that "it cannot take an oath for the due execution of the office." 1 Blackstone's Commentaries (Chitty's ed.), p. \*447. It is true that in many of the American states the right of a corpora-

tion to act as an executor or administrator has been conferred by statute, and where so conferred its right has been upheld. *Killingsworth v. Portland Trust Co.*, 18 Or. 351; *Minnesota L. & T. Co. v. Beebe*, 40 Minn. 7. All the cases, however, which have been called to our attention, in which the right has been upheld, were based on statutory authority in the jurisdiction in which the administrator or executor was appointed. Our statute, section 178, ch. 23, Comp. St. 1905, is as follows: "Administration of the estate of a person dying intestate shall be granted to some one or more of the persons hereinafter mentioned, and they shall be respectively entitled to the same in the following order: *First*. The widow, or next of kin, or both, as the judge of probate may think proper, or such person as the widow or next of kin may request to have appointed, if suitable and competent to discharge the trust. *Second*. If the widow, or next of kin, or the person selected by them shall be unsuitable or incompetent, or if the widow or next of kin shall neglect, for thirty days after the death of the intestate, to apply for administration, or request that administration be granted to some other person, the same may be granted to one or more of the principal creditors, if any such are competent and willing to take it. *Third*. If there be no such creditor competent and willing to take administration, the same may be committed to such other person or persons as the judge of probate may think proper." We cannot doubt that the *persons* named in this section of the statute, who might, under different conditions, be appointed as administrators, were intended by the framers of this act to be real and not artificial persons. It is required by section 196 of this same chapter that an administrator must return under oath within three months a true inventory of the estate. Section 282 requires an administrator to enter an account of his doings in the estate and "that such account shall have annexed thereto the oath of the executor or administrator." There are numerous other duties required of an administrator under the decedent act that could not, in their very nature, be

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performed by other than a natural person. The text-writers on executors and administrators generally agree that, in the absence of a statute authorizing such action, a corporation cannot act in such capacity. *Fidelity I., T. & S. D. Co. v. Niven*, 5 Houst. (Del.) 163; *President and Directors of Georgetown College v. Browne*, 34 Md. 450; *In re Thompson's Estate*, 33 Barb. (N. Y.) 334.

It is urged, however, by counsel for the appellant, that the appointment of plaintiff below, even if irregular, is not subject to collateral attack, and we are cited in support of this contention to our recent decision in the case of *Larson v. Union P. R. Co.*, 70 Neb. 261. In this latter case, the question arose as to whether or not the administrator appointed was the next of kin to the deceased and the court held, in a well prepared opinion by ALBERT, C., that, the county court having acted within its jurisdiction in making the appointment, its judgment could not be called in question in a collateral proceeding. This authority would dispose of the question, if there were any classes of corporations that might be appointed administrators under the laws of this state, because then the county court would be acting within the limits of its jurisdiction, and its judgment would be proof against a collateral assault. But, in our view of the case, no such authority is conferred by the statute, and, as the county court is one whose authority is bounded by the four corners of the statute, whenever it travels beyond these limits, its acts are a mere nullity. We therefore conclude that the attempted appointment of the corporation as administrator was a mere nullity and conferred no right on the appellant to maintain this action.

We therefore recommend that the appeal be dismissed.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the appeal is

DISMISSED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed November 22, 1906. *Former opinion, as modified, adhered to:*

1. **Final Order: REVIEW.** An order to be final and reviewable on error or appeal must dispose of the merits of the case, and leave nothing for the further judicial determination of the court.
2. **Corporation as Administrator: COLLATERAL ATTACK.** The appointment of a corporation as executor or administrator is not contemplated or authorized by the laws of this state, but whether such appointment can be collaterally attacked is not determined.
3. **Former opinion herein, ante, p. 411, as modified, adhered to.**

**BARNES, J.**

This case is before us on a rehearing. Our former opinion, *ante*, p. 411, contains a full statement of the facts involved in this controversy. It was there held that the order or judgment appealed from was not final in its nature, and the appeal was therefore dismissed. It was further held that an order appointing a corporation administrator of the estate of the deceased plaintiff was void.

It is now contended by the appellant that the order in question was a final order or judgment, such as would support an appeal to this court. For a proper understanding of this question, it is necessary to state that at the May term, 1904, of the district court for Douglas county an order of revivor of a judgment, which had theretofore been rendered, was made in this case. It appears that the order not only revived the judgment, but also assumed to set aside and nullify a judgment of the district court in another and independent case, wherein the original attorney for the plaintiff in this action obtained part payment of the judgment herein by attachment and garnishment proceedings. After the order of revivor was made, an execution was issued and levied on the property of the appellee. Thereupon, at the October term, 1904, of said court, an application was made by the appellee, under the provisions of section 602 of the code, to, first, recall the execution issued on said order of revivor; second, to indefinitely postpone

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the sale of the property levied on thereunder; third, to modify the order of revivor, and that all of that portion of said order be vacated which in any manner affected the validity of the proceedings of the court in the other or independent cause, known as docket 59, No. 103; and, fourth, for an accounting in the case, and for an order that the judgment so revived be declared fully paid, canceled and ordered satisfied of record. It appears from the transcript that, upon a full hearing of this application, the motion was sustained as to the first, second and third grounds thereof. This is the order appealed from, and as to this order and its final effect upon the judgment there has been no final determination in the district court. It appears that the judgment stands revived and the attempted appeal is from the order opening up the question of the effect of the garnishment proceedings and that question has not been finally determined by the district court. We think the universal rule of this court is that, where there is anything left for the district court to determine in order to dispose of the substantial rights of the parties to an action, its judgments or orders are not final, and an appeal therefrom to this court cannot be maintained. In *Merle & Heaney Mfg. Co. v. Wallace*, 48 Neb. 886, it was said: "There cannot be a review of an order of the district court opening a judgment and permitting an answer to be filed in the case until there has been a further order or judgment in its nature final."

In *Smith v. Sahler*, 1 Neb. 310, it was held: "When no further action of the court is required to dispose of the cause pending, it is final; when the cause is retained for further action, as in this case, it is interlocutory."

In *Bertram v. Sherman*, 46 Neb. 713, it is said: "An order to be final and reviewable on error or appeal must dispose of the merits of the case and leave nothing for the further judicial determination of the court."

In *Rose v. Dempster Mill Mfg. Co.*, 69 Neb. 27, it was held: "An order setting aside a judgment or decree, fixing the time for filing pleadings and setting the cause down

for a new trial, under section 602 of the code, is not a final order from which appeal or error will lie before trial and a final judgment."

Practically the same rule has been announced in *School District v. Cooper*, 29 Neb. 433; *Clark v. Fitch*, 32 Neb. 511; *Browne v. Edwards & McCullough Lumber Co.*, 44 Neb. 316, and other cases decided by this court, too numerous to mention. It seems clear that the case at bar falls within this rule. As the record stands, it appears that an order of revivor has been entered in the district court for Douglas county; that so much of the order as purported to fix the amount due on the judgment sought to be revived has been set aside; and the defendant therein, the appellee herein, has been allowed to file an answer or showing, and thus contest the amount due thereon. That question is still pending and undetermined in the district court for Douglas county, and, until that matter has been disposed of and the rights of the parties finally judicially determined, appeal or error cannot be prosecuted to this court. We are aware that cases may be found which seem to announce a contrary doctrine, but upon an examination it will be seen that they are cases where the order complained of had the force and effect of finally disposing of the matters in litigation. For instance, it is settled beyond question that error or appeal may be prosecuted from an order of the district court, refusing to set aside its former judgment and allow a defendant to answer and defend, because such an order or judgment disposes of the case and finally determines the rights of the defendant. So while, as stated, there is a seeming conflict in the authorities, yet as a matter of fact they can easily be distinguished and no conflict really exists.

As to the second question above stated, it was said by the learned commissioner who wrote our former opinion that its decision was unnecessary for a proper disposition of the case, but, as a guide to the manner of conducting the future litigation, it was stated that, under the laws of this state, a corporation cannot be appointed administrator of

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the estate of a deceased person, and that such an appointment can be collaterally assailed. We are satisfied with the former conclusion that the appointment of a corporation as executor or administrator is not contemplated or authorized by the laws of this state, but we find that the question whether such appointment can be collaterally attacked was not raised and insisted upon in the lower court, and we do not find it necessary to determine that question.

As stated above, the record in this case shows that the original judgment stands revived, but the question of the amount due thereon is still pending in the district court for Douglas county for final adjudication. When that matter has been judicially determined, and all the questions in litigation are thus disposed of, the appellant, if dissatisfied with the amount found due on the judgment, or if it shall be determined that the judgment has been in fact paid, may then appeal to this court and have all of the questions contained in the record reviewed, including the order now complained of.

For the foregoing reasons, we approve of the conclusion announced in our former opinion, and that opinion, as modified herein, is adhered to.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND & PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY V.  
CHARLES L. BUEL ET AL.

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,291.

**Watercourses: Obstruction: Liability.** In the absence of negligence in the construction of its roadbed across a natural watercourse, a railroad company is not liable for damages done to property on adjacent lands by reason of a flood so unprecedent that it amounts in law to an act of God.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*M. A. Lowe, W. F. Evans, Billingsley & Greene and R. H. Hagelin*, for plaintiff in error.

*Charles O. Whedon, contra.*

EPPERSON, C.

Defendants in error, who were the plaintiffs in the lower court, brought this action for the recovery of alleged damages to their crops and other property caused by the diverting of the water of Salt creek, a natural watercourse. In 1893 the railroad company constructed the railroad running in a northerly and southerly direction through the east half of section 32, township 8, range 6, in Lancaster county, Nebraska, upon which land were two forks of Salt creek, about 80 rods apart, over each of which the railroad was constructed. In the first instance the railroad, which is about 25 feet above the surface of the surrounding land, crossed each branch of the creek upon trestle work, leaving ample space for the flow of the creek. In 1898 the railroad filled the channel of the north branch of the creek with dirt, constructing an embankment of earth under its track in the place of the trestle work, leaving space sufficient only for the Missouri Pacific Railroad, which runs under the defendant's railway near the original north branch of the creek. At the same time defendants constructed an artificial drain, diverting the waters of the north branch of the creek south, along the west line of the defendant's railroad, to the south branch of the creek, and filled in with dirt a part of the space formerly occupied by trestle work where the railroad crossed the south branch of the creek, leaving a space of about 90 feet for the escape of the waters of both branches. In July, 1902, there was a heavy rainfall, increasing the waters of the creek to such an extent that the crops and other property of the plaintiffs west

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of the defendant's railroad in said section 32 were damaged. A trial was had, resulting in a verdict and judgment in favor of the plaintiffs, for the reversal of which the defendant prosecutes proceedings in error.

Upon the trial, evidence was introduced showing that the heavy rainfall which occasioned the damage was unprecedented, and so unusual that it could not have been reasonably contemplated at the time of the construction of the embankment complained of. Defendant, among other things, alleged that the damages sustained by the plaintiffs were caused by the act of God, and that the embankments were necessarily constructed and improved by the defendant, and with the greatest care, skill and foresight. The court instructed the jury: "It is contended by the defendant that the rainfall at the time of the flood complained of was of so unusual and unprecedented a nature as to amount to an act of God. In this connection you are instructed that, if you find from the evidence that, at the time complained of, there occurred a rainfall so unprecedented in amount and duration in that vicinity, and of such a nature as not to be within reasonable expectation, and if you further find that the defendant's action in no way contributed to the overflow, then, in such case, this would amount to a defense and the plaintiffs could not recover. On the other hand, even though you should find that the rainfall, at the time, was so unprecedented in its nature and duration as not to be reasonably expected, so that it would amount to an act of God, yet, if you should also find that any damages which the plaintiffs suffered were also in part caused by the acts of the defendant in obstructing the flow of the water, then, in such case, this would not amount to a defense."

It is a general rule that the owner of land, through which there is a running stream, may improve his property, with due regard, however, to the rights of his neighbor, and that he is liable to the adjoining landowner only for damages resulting by the diversion of the ordinary waters, or such flood waters as might reasonably be an-

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ticipated; and, having constructed such improvements without carelessness, he is not liable for any damages which might be occasioned by extraordinary floods, such as could not reasonably have been contemplated. In other words, the owner of such improvements would not be liable for damages resulting by an act of God, even though necessary improvements made by him were partly responsible for the damage. It follows that, if the defendant in the case at bar constructed the embankment complained of, and the changes made thereby were sufficient to permit the ordinary flow of Salt creek and such flood waters as usually occur, without damage to the plaintiff's property, and the construction and improvement of such embankment were made without carelessness, the defendant would not be liable to the plaintiffs for damages caused by an unprecedented flood, or such as the defendant could not have reasonably contemplated at the time of making the changes, even though the embankment thus erected contributed to the damage complained of. 1 Thompson, Negligence (2d. ed.), sec 72. In *Pittsburg, Ft. W. & C. R. Co. v. Gilliland*, 56 Pa. St. 445, it is said:

"There is no liability on a railroad company for not constructing a culvert so as to pass *extraordinary* floods."

In *Omaha & R. V. R. Co. v. Brown*, 14 Neb. 173, COBB, J., speaking for this court said:

"It was the duty of the railway company, in planning and constructing its bridge, to bring to their execution the engineering knowledge and skill ordinarily practiced in such works, and to see the practical application of such knowledge and skill to the work in hand, among other things, so as to allow of the passage of water and ice, such as is known to pass in the stream annually, or which may reasonably be expected to occur occasionally, without regard to such great or sudden overflows as are often designated as acts of God." This court adhered to that rule in *Omaha & R. V. R. Co. v. Brown*, 16 Neb. 166, and cited it with approval in *McCleneghan v. Omaha & R. V. R. Co.*, 25 Neb. 530.

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In reaching this conclusion, we are mindful of the law which holds one liable who, by his negligence, contributes to the act of God in damaging the property of another. But, according to the rule above cited, a railroad company is not guilty of carelessness, if in the construction of its roadbed it sufficiently provides for the passage of such flood waters only as might reasonably be contemplated at the time of such construction. The law requires no more. The objectionable instruction is not a correct proposition of law, because it permitted the jury to assess to the defendant damages inflicted by the elements, if they found that the defendant's lawful acts contributed thereto. The defendant was not liable, unless by its carelessness it aided in bringing about the damage.

Many errors are assigned and argued by the plaintiff in error, which we do not consider necessary to review at this time. The error in the giving of the above instruction was prejudicial, and we recommend that the judgment of the lower court be reversed, and the cause remanded for a new trial.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons appearing in the above opinion, the judgment of the lower court is reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

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**WABASH RAILROAD COMPANY v. MORTON R. SHARPE.**

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,274.

1. **Carriers: FREIGHT, INSURERS OF DELIVERY.** The general rule is that a common carrier of goods insures their safe delivery to the consignee against loss or injury from whatever cause arising, except only the act of God or the public enemy.
2. ——; ——. A common carrier is responsible for injury to goods

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where the goods were exposed to injury by the carrier's inexcusable detention, and the carrier cannot in such case plead the act of God as a defense.

**ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*F. M. Hall, George S. Grover and C. C. Marlay*, for plaintiff in error.

*Mockett & Polk and O. B. Polk, contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

May 19, 1903, Morton R. Sharpe delivered to the Wabash Railroad Company, at Lafayette, Ind., 5,400 pounds of household goods for shipment to Lincoln, Nebraska. The goods were shipped from Lafayette on the 21st of May, were delayed in Hannibal, Missouri, 24 hours for rebilling, and were delivered to the Missouri Pacific Railway Company, a connecting carrier at Kansas City, on May 26, and held in the yards by the latter company until May 31, where they were practically destroyed by the great flood occurring at that time. The goods finally reached Lincoln June 18, but in such condition as to be useless. This action was brought to recover the value of said goods, and judgment went in favor of the plaintiff for \$865.80, from which judgment the company has taken error to this court.

It is claimed by the railroad company that they shipped the goods within a reasonable time, and delivered them to the connecting carrier at Kansas City in good condition. This may all be true, and still it is no answer to the plaintiff's claim. The common carrier of goods insures their safe delivery to the consignee against loss or injury from whatever cause arising, except only the act of God and the public enemy. The delivery of the goods to the carrier in good order, and their arrival at the place of destination in bad order, makes a *prima facie* case against the carrier. It then devolves upon it to show that the loss or damage

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was caused by the act of God or some other cause which would exempt it from liability. It may be conceded in the present case that the flood by which the goods were practically destroyed was an act of God, which, under ordinary circumstances, would relieve the company; but we think the rule supported by the weight of authority is that a common carrier is responsible for injury to goods by act of God, if he departs from his line of duty, and while thus in fault, and in consequence of that fault, the goods are injured by an act of God which would not otherwise have produced the injury. Or, as stated in one of the cases, a common carrier is responsible for injury to goods by act of God where the goods were exposed to injury by the carrier's inexcusable detention. *Read v. Spaulding*, 30 N. Y. 630; *Michaels v. New York C. R. Co.*, 30 N. Y. 564.. In *McClary v. Sioux City & P. R. Co.*, 3 Neb. 44, it is said:

"And it is held that if the carrier wrongfully delay the transportation of goods, and because of the delay they are injured by a flood, the carrier would be liable," citing *Lowe v. Moss*, 12 Ill. 477, and *Read v. Spaulding*, *supra*. In the absence of any showing to the contrary, it would seem that a delay of five days or more in the yards at Kansas City was an unreasonable delay, but there is evidence that the officer in charge of the United States weather bureau at Kansas City on May 26, the date that these goods were delivered there, notified the public and all railroad companies of the coming flood and warned them to guard their property in the lowlands, and that this notice continued from day to day until the flood had reached its height. Under this condition of affairs, there can be no doubt of the negligence of the carrier and that this negligence exposed the goods to the injury and damage that they afterwards suffered by the act of God.

It is further claimed by the defendant company that in consideration of a reduced rate given to the plaintiff he released it from all liability in excess of \$5 a hundred pounds. Our constitution prohibits a common carrier

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from limiting its common law liability, and in *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Gardiner*, 51 Neb. 70, it was held: "A limitation of the liability of a common carrier contained in a shipping contract will not be recognized or enforced in this state, though valid in the state where made, when such attempted restriction of liability is illegal and contrary to the public policy of this state." This rule has been followed in numerous cases since and has become the settled law of the state.

The judgment, in our opinion, is clearly right, and we recommend its affirmance.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.  

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**AFFA C. SEELEY, EXECUTRIX, APPELLANT, v. JOHN T. RITCHHEY ET AL., APPELLEES.\***

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,539.

1. **Fraudulent Conveyances: CONVEYANCE TO SON: PRESUMPTIONS.** The rule is well settled in this state that a conveyance made by a father to his son, or other near relative, is presumptively fraudulent as to existing creditors.
2. **Evidence examined, and held not to overcome the presumption of fraud arising from a conveyance by a father to his son.**

APPEAL from the district court for Cass county: BENJAMIN F. GOOD, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

*Jesse L. Root*, for appellant.

*Matthew Gering and C. S. Polk, contra.*

DUFFIE, C.

This is the fifth time this case has been before us, the question determined being found in 68 Neb. 120, 127, 129,

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 433, *post.*

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and 73 Neb. 164. The action is a creditor's bill to set aside a deed made by John T. Ritchey to his son Edward Ritchey, and subject the land conveyed thereby to the payment of a deficiency judgment entered against John T. Ritchey on the foreclosure of a mortgage in 1897. The land involved is a farm of 240 acres situated in Cass county, and the expressed consideration in the deed from the father to his son is \$9,600. This conveyance was made March 15, 1897. The mortgage foreclosure took place in Hayes county, and, while the deficiency judgment was ordered November 23, 1897, it was not entered of record by the clerk until April 16, 1900. A copy of the order directing the deficiency judgment was filed in the office of the clerk of the district court for Cass county in February, 1898, and the transcript of the judgment, after the same had been journalized, was filed in Cass county on August 2, 1900. The debt secured by the mortgage was contracted by John T. Ritchey and one James H. Goodrich in 1894, and the mortgage covered 800 acres of land in Hayes county, the joint property of the mortgagors. In March, 1896, John T. Ritchey conveyed to Goodrich his interest in the Hayes county land, the deed containing an agreement on the part of Goodrich to assume and pay the mortgage debt. The summons in the foreclosure proceeding was served on Ritchey in Cass county on September 11, 1895, by leaving a copy at his usual place of residence. The dates material to be borne in mind are the date of the mortgage, May 12, 1894; the commencement of foreclosure proceedings and service on Ritchey, September 11, 1895; the order for a deficiency judgment, made November 23, 1897; the transcript of the judgment filed in Cass county, September 14, 1900, after the same had been journalized, and the conveyance of John T. Ritchey to his son, March 15, 1897.

It will be seen from the above that the debt was contracted previous to the conveyance sought to be set aside, and the law is well settled that where the indebtedness was contracted before the execution of the deed, and the

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grantor and grantee are near relatives, the burden of proof is on the grantee to establish the *bona fides* of the transaction. *Schott v. Machamer*, 54 Neb. 514; *Kirchman v. Kratky*, 51 Neb. 191; *Carson v. Stevens*, 40 Neb. 112. It is conceded by the appellees that the conveyance from the father to his son throws upon them the burden of establishing the good faith of the transaction. The only parties who could know with absolute certainty whether the transfer was *bona fide*, or was made for the purpose of hindering and defrauding the creditors of John T. Ritchey, the father, are the two parties to the transaction, and it is principally from a consideration of their evidence and the undisputed facts in the case that the decree of the district court must stand or fall.

Another transaction between the father and son has some bearing upon this case. One Franklin Walters died seized of 120 acres of land in the neighborhood of the Ritchey farm. Walters had mortgaged this land to Smith. Subsequent to Walters' death, Smith foreclosed his mortgage making the unknown heirs of Walters defendants. Walters died without issue, and his widow, in October, 1892, sold her interest in the land to John T. Ritchey who took possession thereof. Smith either neglected or refused to sell under his decree of foreclosure and after Ritchey purchased the widow's interest he tried to buy the Smith decree. Smith would not sell, and Ritchey induced the clerk of the district court to issue an order of sale on the decree. The land was sold and bid in in the name of Edward Ritchey. Smith resisted confirmation of the sale and, in order to get him to withdraw his objections, John T. Ritchey paid him \$75. Smith testified that Ritchey told him he desired to have the land sold under the decree of foreclosure "to clear the title from any of the heirs—to cut out the heirs." At this time Ritchey was administrator of the estate of Franklin Walters, and in that capacity he received from the sheriff for a small surplus which the land brought in excess of the decree. After obtaining his sheriff's deed to this land, Edward

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Ritchey took possession and occupied it, either by himself or his tenants, for three or four years and until a sale to one Henry Bornemeier, made in 1897. It is claimed by defendants and appellees that the proceeds of the sale of this farm were paid by Edward to his father on the purchase of the 240-acre farm, the conveyance of which is assailed in this action, while the plaintiff and appellant claims that this farm, while standing in the name of Edward Ritchey, was purchased and paid for by his father, he being the real owner thereof, and, of right, entitled to the purchase money. The evidence is undisputed that Bornemeier paid \$5,000 for the 120 acres sold him. John T. and Edward Ritchey testified that of this sum \$4,000 was paid by Edward to his father on the purchase of the 240-acre farm by Edward. The evidence is undisputed that Bornemeier paid \$1,000 in cash, assumed a mortgage for \$1,300 then on the land, and gave three notes for the balance of the purchase price, two for \$1,000 each and one for \$708.

Another matter connected with this 120-acre tract might be mentioned. Both John T. and Edward Ritchey testified on the trial that Edward paid \$1,500 of his own money on the purchase at sheriff's sale and that John T. Ritchey furnished the balance of the money, making a gift of that amount to his son. Edward was at that time a minor, and his brother William testifies that he had no money. When asked where he got the money, Edward testified that he had \$500 in Waters' Bank in Elmwood, and \$700 or \$800 in Murty's Bank in Weeping Water; that he drew this money out a short time before the sheriff's sale in 1893 and, with other cash he had around home, delivered it to his father who bid for him at the sale. The bankers were produced upon the trial, and testified that Edward Ritchey never had any money to his credit in either bank. Phoebe Ritchey, the mother of Edward, testified that his father made him a gift of the Walters land, and to our minds the evidence is quite conclusive that what money he furnished for the purchase of this land, if any, did not come from the sources claimed.

It is urged with much force by the defendants that John T. Ritchey could have no intent to defraud creditors in transferring the 240-acre farm to his son, inasmuch as there were no debts outstanding against him, except that held by the plaintiff; that, when he conveyed his interest in the mortgaged premises to Goodrich, Goodrich assumed and agreed to pay the whole mortgage debt and that he supposed the debt had been provided for in this way. It is further urged that he had no knowledge of the foreclosure proceedings and no knowledge that a deficiency judgment had been entered against him, until the transcript was filed in Cass county in 1900. It is true that personal service of the summons was not had on him, but service made by a copy left at his usual place of residence. His wife testified that she placed the copy left for him in the organ and forgot to give it to him until about six weeks after the same had been left by the sheriff. The return shows service on September 11, 1895, and if the copy was given him by his wife within six weeks from that date he must have had knowledge of the suit sometime in October, 1895. Again, the deed from Ritchey to Goodrich bears date March 16, 1896, showing that it was made while the suit was pending, and it is improbable that a pending suit against the land would not be considered and discussed between the parties at the time the transfer was made.

A further matter for consideration in determining the intent with which the conveyance by John T. Ritchey to his son was made is the question of Goodrich's financial ability to carry out his agreement to pay this mortgage. It is true that John T. Ritchey testifies that Goodrich was solvent and able to meet the obligation, but the fact remained that, as a part consideration for the transfer, Goodrich executed his note to Ritchey for \$650, payable November 15, 1896, and that this note has never been paid, and Goodrich, at some time after the giving of this note, took the benefit of the bankruptcy act. If John T. Ritchey could not collect from Goodrich his note for \$650, he had

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little cause to believe that the plaintiff could collect a claim against him of \$2,600 or more. Both John T. and Edward Ritchey testified that the land was paid for in the following manner:

Proceeds of sale to Bornemeier, Walters land.....	\$4,000
Check on Bank of Murdock given by son.....	150
Cash .....	150
2,500 bushels of corn at 22 to 25 cents a bushel, estimated .....	575
1,800 to 1,900 bushels of wheat at 50 cents a bushel, estimated .....	925
Car load hogs.....	700
Note .....	800
Mortgage assumed .....	2,300
	<hr/>
	\$9,600

We have already seen that Bornemeier did not pay cash for the 120 acres of land, and neither John T. nor Edward Ritchey pretended that the notes given Edward by Bornemeier were turned over by him to his father. The cashier of the Bank of Murdock was produced, and his testimony given to the effect that Edward never drew a check for \$150 on that bank, and there are other matters making it improbable that other items going to make up the consideration were in fact paid. That the testimony of these two men has been flatly contradicted by undisputed facts, and by evidence which cannot be controverted or doubted, is too apparent from the record. The burden was on them to show the good faith of the transaction. We regret to say that a careful examination of the record convinces us that their testimony is unreliable in many particulars. The truth is easily told. The more critically a truthful statement is examined and questioned, the more apparent its truthfulness appears. Witnesses may be, and often are, honestly mistaken in matters attending a transaction, but it is not probable that so many circumstances could be misunderstood or forgotten by truthful witnesses as is apparent here. Our reading of

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the record convinces us that a decree should have been entered for the plaintiff below subjecting the land to the payment of her judgment.

We therefore recommend that the decree of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to enter a decree in accordance with the prayer of the petition.

**ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.**

**By the Court:** For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to enter a decree in accordance with the prayer of the petition.

**JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.**

The following opinion on rehearing was filed February 21, 1907. *Judgment of reversal vacated and judgment of district court affirmed:*

1. **Fraudulent Conveyances: EVIDENCE: BURDEN OF PROOF.** A transfer of real estate by a debtor to a near relative is looked upon with suspicion, and the burden of proving the *bona fides* of the transaction is upon the grantee. Where, however, the evidence shows that the transfer is made when the grantor's indebtedness is only a small amount compared with the value of his property, and his indebtedness is secured by a mortgage on other land apparently worth nearly, if not quite, as much as the indebtedness, the suspicion is removed, and, a consideration being proved, the *bona fides* of the transaction is established.
2. **Evidence.** Upon a rehearing of this case, it is held that the evidence is sufficient to overcome the presumption of fraud in the transfer from the father to the son, and the former opinion, *ante*, p. 427, is overruled.

**EPPERSON, C.**

This case is before the court on rehearing. A history of the litigation relating to the question now considered may be found in 68 Neb. 120, and *ante*, p. 427. The transaction upon which the action is founded may be restated

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in part as follows: In May, 1894, the defendant John T. Ritchey and one Goodrich gave a mortgage to James E. Seeley on 800 acres of land in Hayes county, Nebraska, to secure an indebtedness of \$2,650. The Hayes county land was under the control and management of Goodrich who used it as a ranch. September 11, 1895, foreclosure proceedings were begun, and the Hayes county land sold June 21, 1897. On November 23, 1897, a deficiency judgment was announced against the mortgagors for \$2,050, and made of record April 16, 1900. For several years prior to the making of the mortgage John T. Ritchey owned and resided upon 240 acres of land in Cass county. On March 15, 1897, he conveyed this land to his son, the defendant Edward Ritchey. This transfer plaintiff alleges was without consideration and made for the purpose of defrauding the creditors of John T. Ritchey.

A former transaction between the father and the son bears directly upon the question of a consideration for the alleged fraudulent conveyance. John T. Ritchey had an interest in the Walters 120 acres which he conveyed to Edward in 1893. This transfer plaintiff also claims was fraudulent. Other interests in this land were transferred to Edward by virtue of a judicial sale. The legal effect of the transaction between the defendants through which the title to the Walters land was placed in the son has considerable bearing on the case. If the Walters land was in fact the property of the son, then the good faith of the transfer assailed is supported in so far as a partial consideration therefor is established. This we consider as having a bearing on the question in the case. It must be borne in mind that the title to this land was placed in the son in June, 1893, and at that time there was no unsecured indebtedness owing by the father. It is true, proceedings were had which resulted in a judicial sale of the Walters land; that the son was the purchaser at such sale; and that such sale was brought about through the efforts of the father.

Edward Ritchey's title to the Walters land is not as-

sailed by the pleadings in this case. Nevertheless, plaintiff contends that the Walters land was in fact the property of the father held in trust by the son; that the selling price thereof belonged, by reason of the sale, to the father, and therefore it did not constitute any part of the consideration for the transfer assailed. Plaintiff's decedent did not become a creditor of John T. Ritchey until after the conveyance of the Walters land. There is no presumption of fraud against the defendants which would cast upon them the burden of proving good faith in that transaction. The burden is upon a creditor, when the debt was contracted subsequent to a conveyance assailed as fraudulent, to prove that such was made and accepted with a fraudulent purpose. *Jansen v. Lewis*, 52 Neb. 556; *Jayne v. Hymer*, 66 Neb. 785. In *Lavigne v. Tobin*, 52 Neb. 686, it was held: "Except as against existing creditors and as against those to whom he contemplates becoming indebted, one may gratuitously convey his property to his wife." This rule as to the burden of proving the title to the Walters land will apply, even though it was not assailed by the pleadings. We do not overlook the apparently false testimony of both defendants herein. It does appear that their testimony that \$1,500 was paid by the son to the father in cash as a partial consideration for the transfer of the Walters land is false. But, believing this testimony false, we must conclude that the entire value of the Walters land was a gift from the father to the son. There is no inference deducible that the transfer was in fraud of subsequent creditors. It is immaterial as far as the disposition of this case is concerned to determine whether or not all or only a part of the value of the Walters land was a gift from the father to the son. It is contended by plaintiff that the Walters land was purchased by John T. Ritchey, who caused the title to be placed in the name of Edward Ritchey for the purpose of defrauding the heirs of Walters, deceased. The evidence is insufficient to support this contention. It is not shown that the price paid at

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the judicial sale was inadequate, nor is it shown that the heirs in any way suffered loss by reason of the sale of the Walters land in the manner in which it was sold. There is another fact having some weight in sustaining the defendants' contention that the Walters land was a gift to the son. Edward's elder brother received from his parents 66 acres of valuable land as a gift when he reached his majority, so that the transaction here assailed, which we are called upon to denounce as suspicious, seems to be but an equitable advancement by the father to his son. We cannot conclude from the evidence that the Walters land was held in trust by Edward Ritchey for his father.

It being therefore established that Edward Ritchey was the owner of 120 acres of land, which he either farmed or rented for four years prior to the purchase of the land here in controversy, we conclude that his financial circumstances were such that he could finance the transaction now alleged by plaintiff to be fraudulent. In 1897 the Walters land was sold by Edward Ritchey who received therefor in cash and notes maturing within a few months thereafter the sum of \$4,000, which defendants testified was paid to John T. Ritchey as a part of the consideration for the land in controversy. This plaintiff contends was impossible because only \$1,000 was paid in cash. We entertain no doubt but that the purchase price of the Walters land was delivered to the elder Ritchey. Taking plaintiff's theory that the Walters land was in fact the property of John T. Ritchey, she is not in a position to deny that the elder Ritchey received the money. Therefore, so far as the \$4,000 of the consideration paid to the father for the 240 acres of land is concerned, the question must be determined upon the *bona fides* of Edward's title to the Walters land, which, as above shown, is established. Neither can there be any contention as to the mortgage of \$2,600 assumed by Edward, nor as to the note for \$800 given by him to his father as a part of the consideration. We can say nothing as to the balance of the consideration

paid in addition to what has been said by this court in the opinion reported *ante*, p. 427.

In March, 1896, John T. Ritchey sold his one-half interest in the Hayes county ranch to Goodrich, who assumed the mortgage, and, even though it was known to Ritchey in March, 1897, that Goodrich was insolvent, it does not appear that John T. Ritchey had any reason to apprehend that a deficiency judgment for any considerable sum would be rendered against him in the future. The Hayes county ranch consisted of 800 acres, which John T. Ritchey considered worth \$4,000. The mortgage indebtedness amounted to \$2,650, with interest. The appraised value of the land was \$2,000. From this it does not seem that, on the date of the deed herein assailed as fraudulent, John T. Ritchey could have penetrated the future and foreseen a deficiency judgment of \$2,050. His subsequent conduct does not indicate that he was attempting to conceal his property from his creditors. After the sale of the land to his son, he continued in the grain and stock business, and built an elevator which he sold for \$1,750 two years later. As to one small item going to make up the consideration alleged to have been paid for the land, we are convinced that the testimony given by the defendants was false. This was an item of only \$150. It does not appear reasonable that parties would wilfully falsify as to this. It was shown that a larger sum had been withdrawn from the bank by Edward Ritchey at about the time of this transfer, and it seems to us that such a mistake is one that might be made by honest men. The land in question was farmed by the son. He controlled it as owner, employed help and in all respects exercised dominion over his property. Later, upon a sale, he fixed the purchase price, refusing to accept the advice of his father as to the amount.

We are mindful of the rule "that, where the indebtedness was contracted before the execution of the deed, and the grantor and grantee are near relatives, the burden of proof is on the grantee to establish the *bona fides* of the

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transaction." Such transfers are looked upon with suspicion, and, were the rule otherwise, a debtor in failing circumstances could easily defraud his creditors by conveying his property to the members of his family. Where, however, the transfer is made when the grantor's indebtedness is only a small amount compared with the value of his property, and where the debt in controversy is secured by a mortgage on a large tract of land apparently worth nearly, if not quite, as much as the indebtedness, the suspicion is removed and, a consideration being proved, the good faith of the transfer is established. Were we to follow our own inclination, instead of the law as we believe it to be, we would incline toward a reversal of the judgment of the district court because of the apparently false testimony of the defendants herein, but we believe the defendants have established the *bona fides* of the transfer assailed, not through their false testimony, but in spite of it. That the Walters land was a gift from the father to the son was sworn to by the mother and the brother, and their testimony was unimpeached. The dates of the several transfers were proved by record evidence. The \$800 note given as a part of the consideration for the deed was corroborated by the production of the note. Disinterested witnesses testified as to the acts of ownership exercised by Edward Ritchey. In view of the father's financial circumstances at the time of the transfer, we are convinced that the defendants have successfully overcome the presumption which the law imposes upon them. In *Hill v. Schmuck*, 65 Neb. 173, it is held:

"A conveyance without fraudulent intent, by a solvent man, of lands to his wife or child, is presumed to have been made in consideration of his moral obligation for the support and maintenance of the grantee, and in the absence of evidence of a contrary intent, will be held to have transferred the entire title, both legal and equitable; so that the transaction cannot be successfully assailed by subsequent creditors of the grantor."

In the case at bar, we find that the financial circumstan-

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ces of the father, especially at the time the Walters land was transferred to the son, were such that the rule above announced clearly governs. And further, as to the transfer assailed, there is no need of presuming that the consideration rested upon a moral obligation, an actual consideration being established. The judgment of the learned trial court was for the defendants, but this judgment was reversed, *ante*, p. 427. The conclusion there announced seems to be based upon the unreliability of defendant's testimony. As above shown, we cannot agree to the conclusion reached.

We therefore recommend that the former opinion be overruled and the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the former judgment of this court is vacated and the judgment of the district court affirmed.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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DANIEL M. FIKE v. MALINDA OTT.

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,244.

1. Petition examined, and held good as against a general demurrer.
2. Harmless Error. Assignments based on rulings upon objections to an amendment to the reply and motions directed against the amended reply examined, and held that the errors, if any, in such rulings were cured by the charge to the jury.
3. ——. The reception of incompetent evidence tending to establish a certain fact is not prejudicial error when the same fact is conclusively established by competent evidence.
4. The doctrine of the ostensible authority of an agent can be invoked only by such as have dealt with the agent on the faith of his ostensible authority.

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5. **Money Loaned: PURCHASE OF LAND: EQUITIES.** The mere fact that one loans money to another, wherewith to buy land, gives the lender no equity in the land bought therewith by the borrower.
6. **Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the verdict.**
7. **A transcript on appeal should contain the judgment or order sought to be reversed or modified, and, in addition thereto, only such matters as may be necessary to present the rulings sought to be reviewed; to include other matters is a useless expense and tends to obscure the real questions presented.**

**ERROR to the district court for Thayer county: LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

**V. O. Rewick and Robert J. Sloan, for plaintiff in error.**

**M. S. Gray and Charles H. Sloan, contra.**

**ALBERT, C.**

In her petition the plaintiff alleges that she, with her husband, Jenores T. Ott, executed their warranty deed to certain real estate to one John C. Saylor for an agreed price of \$320, which deed was placed in the hands of one Whipkey to be delivered to Saylor upon his payment to Whipkey of \$320 for plaintiff; that Saylor paid the money and got the deed; that about March 5 the defendant fraudulently induced Whipkey to pay the money to him without authority from plaintiff and fraudulently converted it to his own use and benefit, and though often demanded refused repayment, and prays judgment for \$320, and interest at 7 per cent. from March 5, 1901. Demurrer to the petition was overruled, whereupon the defendant answered, denying each of the allegations of the petition, and as an affirmative defense alleged in substance: That, while the legal title to the land at the date of plaintiff's conveyance was in her, she held it in trust for the use of the defendant who had paid the purchase price, and that the conveyance thereof by the plaintiff's said deed to Saylor was in pursuance of an agreement between himself and the plaintiff's husband to the effect that the latter should procure a purchaser for the land and

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effect a sale thereof, the proceeds to be paid to the defendant; that after the sale of the premises to Saylor the matters in difference between the plaintiff and her husband and the defendant were submitted to arbitration, that an award was duly made, and the amount awarded the plaintiff was received and accepted by her in full payment of all matters in difference, including the claim in suit. The reply, with an amendment thereto, is voluminous. It contains much that is redundant and immaterial. It was filed over the defendant's objection, and was afterwards assailed by motions, which were overruled by the court. In its charge to the jury the court very properly reduced the reply, as amended, to a single sentence by an instruction in these words: "The plaintiff in reply denies the allegations of the answer, especially the arbitration or payment to her of any proceeds, or that there ever was a settlement, or that she authorized any one to receive same for her or did receive anything for her land." The jury found for the plaintiff, and judgment went accordingly. The defendant seeks to reverse the judgment by proceedings in error instituted in April, 1905.

It is first claimed that the court erred in overruling the demurrer to the petition. The argument in this behalf is based on the omission of the plaintiff to allege that she was the owner of the land conveyed and for which the consideration which came into the defendant's hands was paid. Every material allegation of her petition stands admitted for the purposes of the demurrer. Those allegations show that the money was left with a third party for the use of the plaintiff. It was her money, and whether she had title to the land or gave value received for the money does not concern the defendant whose relation to the transaction, so far as appears from the petition, was that of a mere intermeddler, who wrongfully obtained possession of a sum of money belonging to the plaintiff.

There are assignments based on the rulings of the court permitting the plaintiff to amend her reply, and on the motions made by the defendant assailing the reply, as

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It is also claimed that the verdict is not sustained by sufficient evidence. The evidence covers a wide range, and includes transactions between the defendant and plaintiff's husband extending back for many years. To attempt at this time to review it would extend this opinion to undue length, and would not, as it seems to us, serve any useful purpose. The evidence is conflicting. Reasonable men might well differ as to the side on which it preponderates. A jury has passed upon it, and we are satisfied that their verdict should not be disturbed. As to the amount of the verdict, it is not excessive, if the testimony of the plaintiff and her husband be taken as true. There are corroborative circumstances. The jury believed these portions, as they had a right to do for aught that appears to their discredit. We cannot, therefore, say that the verdict is excessive. The defendant also complains of certain rulings of the court sustaining objections to certain questions asked the plaintiff on cross-examination. By these questions the defendant sought to go into matters not brought out on direct examination. Besides, matters sought to be elicited by these questions were afterwards gone into by the defendant himself while on the stand. His evidence as to such matters stands uncontradicted. Hence, even had the court erred in sustaining the objections to the questions on cross-examination, as the matters were conclusively established by other evidence, he was not prejudiced by such rulings.

The foregoing disposes of this case, but it may not be out of place to add that the record is unnecessarily voluminous. The summons, including the officer's return thereon, a motion for security for costs, with a notice and affidavits pertaining thereto, and many other matters having no bearing on the questions presented to this court are included in the transcript. They serve no useful purpose there, and only add to the expense of the litigants and the labor of the reviewing court. The jurisdictional feature of a transcript filed in this court is the "judgment, decree or final order sought to be reversed, vacated or modified."

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Sections 586 and 675 of the code. To this should be added only so much of the remainder of the record below as is necessary to present the questions sought to be reviewed. The fact that the pages are not numbered in this case makes the useless features the more objectionable.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

JACKSON, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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WILLIAM N. SKINNER v. LEWIS A. WILSON.

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,251.

1. Errors, Joint Assignment of. Where several instructions are grouped in one assignment, and there is nothing in the language of the assignment to indicate that the objection goes to them severally, they will be examined only so far as may be necessary to determine whether any one of them was rightly given or refused. *World Mutual Benefit Ass'n v. Worthing*, 59 Neb. 587, and cases there cited.
2. ——. In the consideration of the assignments—the verdict is not sustained by sufficient evidence, is excessive and is contrary to law—instructions not complained of in such a way as to be reviewable in this court will be taken as the law of the case, and if when tested by such instructions the verdict is not vulnerable to the objections lodged against it the assignments will not be sustained.
3. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the verdict.

ERROR to the district court for Keya Paha county: WILLIAM H. WESTOVER, JUDGE. Affirmed.

Halleck F. Rose, W. H. Horton, W. C. Brown and W. B. Rose, for plaintiff in error.

Kirkpatrick & Hager and Lear & Wilhite, contra.

ALBERT, C.

On the 21st day of May, 1902, the defendant was, and for many years had been, engaged in printing and publishing a newspaper, and conducting a general printing and publishing business in the village of Springview, in Keya Paha county. His newspaper was known as the "Springview Herald," and was the only one printed in that county, and he enjoyed a monopoly of the business in which he was engaged. On the date mentioned, in consideration of the sum of \$1,400, he executed a bill of sale to the plaintiff, whereby he transferred the newspaper and printing plant and good will of his said business to the plaintiff. The bill of sale, among other things, contains the following stipulation: "I hereby bind myself that I will not engage in the newspaper or job-printing business within the limits of said Keya Paha county for the next ten years following the date of these presents, in any way, shape or manner, and in case I fail to keep this last understanding, agreed upon by myself with the said Lewis A. Wilson, I further bind myself by these presents to pay the said Lewis A. Wilson in good and lawful money of the United States the penal sum of \$2,000 as damages for the nonfulfilment of this said stipulation." The plaintiff went into possession of the property, and at once engaged in the business theretofore conducted by the defendant, and for about two years thereafter likewise enjoyed a monopoly of the business in that county. On the 5th day of May, 1904, another newspaper, called the "Keya Paha County News," and printing plant was established in the same village. From that date until the following September the new plant was ostensibly owned and conducted by the defendant's wife, but the plaintiff avers, and the evidence sufficiently shows, that the defendant was the real owner, and controlled and managed the business. In the month last mentioned a sale of the new plant was made to a third party, who still owns and conducts the business at that place. The plaintiff then brought suit

against the defendant, alleging a breach of the stipulation hereinbefore set out, and laying his damages at \$2,000. The answer is a general denial of all the allegations of the petition. The trial court submitted the cause to the jury on the theory that the amount named in the stipulation should be regarded as liquidated damages, which was covered by an instruction directing them to award \$2,000 damages in case they found for the plaintiff. The jury found for the plaintiff, and awarded damages as directed, and judgment was given accordingly. The defendant brings error.

One of the complaints now urged by the defendant is that the evidence is insufficient to warrant a finding that he had engaged in the newspaper or job-printing business in violation of his agreement with the plaintiff. The evidence shows that, while the new plant was purchased in the name of the defendant's wife, the defendant himself was concerned in it, and that, although he was engaged in banking in the same town, he negotiated a loan for the purchase price with another bank, signing his wife's note as surety. It also shows that he referred to the new plant as his or "ours," and that he set type, solicited business, made contracts for business for the new plant, wrote for the newspaper, and in many other ways so conducted himself with reference to it as to warrant the jury in finding that he was either the real owner or so concerned in its management as to convict him of a violation of his agreement with the defendant. In fact, his entire transaction with reference to the new plant is of such a character as to warrant the jury in finding that the ostensible ownership and management of the new plant by his wife was a mere device by which he sought to shield himself from the consequences of a violation of his agreement.

The principal contention of the defendant is that the court erred in submitting the cause on the theory that the amount named in the stipulation was to be regarded as liquidated damages. The only exception taken by the defendant to the charge of the court was to the instruction covering that theory. That exception was made in the

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form of a written objection, which was allowed by the court and filed with the clerk. Afterwards, and before the jury had returned a verdict, the defendant, by leave of court, withdrew his exception. After verdict he filed a motion for a new trial, in which he grouped this instruction and five others, some at least of which are clearly right. It has become a settled rule of practice in this state that when several instructions are grouped in one assignment, and there is nothing in the language of the assignment to indicate that the objection goes to them severally, they will be examined only so far as may be necessary to determine whether any one of them was rightly given or refused. This rule was applied in *World Mutual Benefit Ass'n v. Worthing*, 59 Neb. 587, and the several cases there cited. It is invoked by the plaintiff in this case, and there seems to be no escape from it, save by overruling the long line of cases in which it has been applied, which we are not disposed to do. The rule is perhaps technical, but it is not to be condemned solely on that ground. The orderly and economical administration of justice necessitates rules of practice, and, however liberal such rules may be, there must still be somewhere a dividing line between doing and not doing, compliance and noncompliance. This of necessity gives rise to what are commonly called technicalities, and they are unavoidable under any system for the administration of justice according to law. But the defendant contends that whether the amount named in the stipulation should be held to be liquidated damages, or merely a penalty, is sufficiently raised by the assignments that the verdict is not sustained by sufficient evidence, is excessive and contrary to law. As we have seen, the instructions cannot be reviewed at this time. They must be regarded, therefore, as the law of the case. *World Mutual Benefit Ass'n v. Worthing*, *supra*. By one of them the jury were instructed to the effect that, in case they found for the plaintiff, the sum named in the stipulation would be the measure of his damages. In awarding \$2,000 damages the jury merely followed that instruction, which, in view

of the record, must be regarded as the law of the case as to the measure of damages, and a verdict that responds to it cannot be regarded as excessive nor as contrary to law.

Ordinarily, technical rules are applied with some reluctance, but in this case it does not appear that to do so will work any injustice. The defendant at the time of the sale to the plaintiff was an experienced newspaper man and printer, and had conducted the plant sold to the plaintiff for a number of years. The plaintiff was without experience. When he bought the plant he also bought and paid for the good-will and immunity from defendant's competition within the county for a period of ten years. Within two years the defendant entered the field as a competitor. The fact that he was a banker and an experienced newspaper man who had formerly occupied the field made him a formidable rival. His transfer of the new plant to a third party necessarily carried with it a portion of the good-will which he had transferred to the plaintiff for a consideration. Had he been dealing with tangible property his conduct would be called by an ugly name. By the violation of his contract he inflicted substantial losses upon the plaintiff, and set in motion certain forces which will cause him losses for some time to come. The extent of such losses are unascertainable. While we may be morally certain that they have resulted or will result, evidence from which they could be computed with any degree of certainty could not be obtained. The case then presents this dilemma: If the amount named be regarded as liquidated damages, the defendant is liable to suffer injustice; if it be regarded as a penalty, the plaintiff by reason of the inherent difficulty of proving his damages is liable to suffer loss. Confronted by such a dilemma, there should be no complaint if the loss be allowed to fall on the head of the wrongdoer, who made his agreement voluntarily, and was pressed by no hard necessity to violate it.

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Roby v. State.

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It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE, C., concurs.

JACKSON, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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**FRANK F. ROBY v. STATE, EX REL. FARMERS GRAIN & LIVE STOCK COMPANY ET AL.**

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,287.

1. Railroads: SIDE-TRACKS: HIGHWAYS. A side-track constructed and used by a railroad company, and which connects with its main line and occupies a portion of the public streets of a city under a grant from the city to such company, will be presumed, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to be a part of the public highway system of such company, and a public highway within the meaning of section 4, art. XI of the constitution.
2. The term railroad includes all side-tracks necessary or convenient for the transaction of the company's business.
3. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the finding and order of the trial court.

ERROR to the district court for Buffalo county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*E. C. & H. V. Calkins*, for plaintiff in error.

*Warren Pratt, C. A. Robinson, Edson Rich and John N. Baldwin*, contra.

ALBERT, C.

The Farmers Grain and Live Stock Company applied to the district court for a writ of mandamus to compel the Union Pacific Railroad Company to furnish cars on a cer-

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tain side-track for the shipment of grain from the relator's elevator. Frank F. Roby intervened for the purpose of resisting the application. The district court allowed the writ and the intervenor brings error.

A somewhat extended statement of the facts is necessary to a proper understanding of the case. In 1886 the Kearney Milling Company built a flouring mill in the city of Kearney, and induced the respondent railroad company to construct a side-track, extending eastward from its connection with the main track to and across certain lots owned by the milling company, upon which its mill stood. In order to reach the mill property, the track was constructed for some distance on a public street, and across certain other streets and alleys of the city, and also across the corner of a lot belonging to a third party. This side-track extended east and west immediately north of the mill, and a warehouse and elevator were afterwards erected by the milling company immediately north of the side-track. Afterwards the milling company moved its elevator to two lots, belonging to it, lying east of the premises just mentioned, and just across one of the alleys of the city, and the side-track, in order to accommodate the elevator in its new location, was extended eastward across the alley and across a lot belonging to the milling company. In 1898 proceedings were brought to foreclose a mortgage covering the milling company's property, and the property passed into the hands of a receiver appointed in said proceedings. The receiver leased the elevator on the lots east of the mill to certain third parties, and such lessees leased certain lots belonging to other parties lying east and just across a public street from the elevator, and for the better accommodation of the elevator induced the respondent railroad company to extend the side-track across such street and one of the lots east of the elevator property. The mortgage was foreclosed, and the intervenor became the purchaser thereof at foreclosure sale, obtaining possession thereunder in March, 1899. Early in the summer of 1901 he inclosed the mill property with a fence, placing gates

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across the side-track, securing them by locks. At that time, however, service on the side-track was not required beyond the west line of the intervenor's property, save for the accommodation of the intervenor himself. In 1903 the relator bought the two lots lying across the street from the elevator, and across one of which the side-track had been extended, and erected thereon a grain elevator for the storage and shipment of grain. The relator's elevator was so placed that it could be easily accommodated by the side-track in question. When the relator got ready to ship grain from its elevator, the intervenor refused to permit the respondent to move cars over the side-track across his premises, claiming that such track had been constructed solely for the accommodation of his grantors, and that the occupancy of his premises by the respondent, with its track, was merely by virtue of a license, and not by virtue of any easement in such premises for a right of way. The evidence is somewhat meager as to the arrangement between the milling company, the intervenor's predecessor in estate, and the respondent railroad company for the construction of the side-track in the first place. One witness who was president of the milling company during the negotiations for the side-track and who took part therein, when examined as to such arrangement, testified as follows: "My recollection is they insisted we should give them the right of way, and there was a lot west of the mill. They sent a man out here at that time; there was some question as to whether the city would let us down through there, and they sent a man out to see whether they could get to the mill. He reported that he would have to go across that lot that was right across there west; and that he would have to cut off the corner of it, if he crossed, there would be a short curve, that the curve would be too sharp; and they insisted, in case there was any damage, that the milling company would have to pay the railroad company whatever damage there was to that lot. That is my recollection. Q. Was the milling company to get any damages or anything for the right of way across this prop-

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erty? A. I don't think so; of course that is a long time ago."

Cross-examination: "Q. They wanted a switch to the mill so that they could load and unload? A. Yes. Q. They wasn't seeking to get it for any other purpose excepting the accommodation of the mill? A. That was all. Q. Any talk of it being used for anything else? A. So far as I can recollect there was not. Q. There was no agreement that it was not to be used for any purpose but for your mill, was there? A. I have no recollection of anything being said." It also appears that, when the milling company moved its elevator to the lots east of the mill, the respondent agreed to extend the track and pay for moving the elevator. In each instance it laid the track and furnished the material. Before the side-track was constructed the city granted the respondent a right of way over and across such of the streets and alleys as it traversed or crossed.

These facts, we think, warrant an inference that the respondent constructed the side-track across the intervener's premises under at least an implied grant of a right of way from the intervener's privies in estate, the then owners of the premises, and that such track now constitutes a part and parcel of the respondent's railroad system, open alike to all requiring service thereon. Section 4, art. XI of the constitution is as follows: "Railways heretofore constructed, or that may hereafter be constructed in this state are hereby declared public highways, and shall be free to all persons for the transportation of their persons and property thereon, under such regulations as may be prescribed by law." The term railroad includes all side-tracks necessary or convenient for the transaction of the company's business. *Township of Rock Creek v. Strong*, 96 U. S. 271; *Black v. Philadelphia & R. R. Co.*, 58 Pa: St. 249; *Town of Mason v. Ohio River R. Co.*, 51 W. Va. 183; *State v. Stone*, 119 Mo. 668. The side-track in question is connected with the respondent's main line. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, taking into account the fact that it crosses the property of third parties and occupies a portion of the

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public streets of the city under a grant from the city, the presumption would be that it is a part of the respondent's railroad system, and a public highway within the meaning of the constitutional provision above quoted. That presumption is not rebutted by the evidence in this case, but rather strengthened. The evidence shows that before constructing the road the respondent, in its negotiations with the milling company, the intervener's predecessor in estate, insisted on a right of way. It is true, it was built at the instance of the milling company and for years was used almost, if not quite, exclusively for its benefit, but that appears to have been because there were no other persons who could be accommodated thereby. It is also true that the intervener, after the track had been laid almost 15 years, put gates across it and inclosed his premises with a fence, but at the time there were no persons beyond his premises who required service on the side-track and the gates therefore were no restriction on general traffic.

It seems to us that the finding of the district court is fully sustained by the evidence, and that the writ was properly allowed. It is recommended that the order allowing the writ be affirmed.

JACKSON, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the order of the district court allowing the writ is

**AFFIRMED.**

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S. OLIN COLE, APPELLEE, v. WILLIAM H. MANNERS ET AL.,  
APPELLANTS.

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,290.

1. **Injunction: IRREPARABLE INJURY.** An injury which cannot be measured by any pecuniary standard, or which because of its nature or the financial condition of the wrongdoer cannot be adequately compensated in damages, is irreparable within the meaning of

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the law, and one for which, ordinarily, there is no adequate remedy at law.

2. **Joint Obligors: Defense of Infancy.** The general rule that a valid defense as to one of two joint obligors inures to the benefit of both is subject to the exception that, when such defense is infancy, the infant may be discharged and a recovery had as to his co-obligor; and this exception applies although the obligee knew of the infancy when he took the obligation.
3. **Lease: INJUNCTION: DEFENSE OF INFANCY.** Ordinarily, a lease may be avoided by a tenant on the ground of infancy; but while in possession thereunder the plea of infancy is not available in a suit brought to restrain him from making use of his possession to inflict irreparable injuries upon his landlord.
4. **Pleadings and evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the decree.**

**APPEAL from the district court for Cass county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*Matthew Gering, for appellants.*

*Byron Clark, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

In what follows we shall refer to the appellee as the plaintiff, and to the appellants as the defendants, that being the relation in which they respectively stood to the record in the court below. In 1893, by an instrument in writing, the plaintiff leased certain of his lands to the defendants for the term of one year, beginning on the first day of March, 1904, reserving as rent two-fifths of all crops grown upon the cultivated land during the term and \$3 an acre for the pasture land; the share rent to be delivered to the plaintiff in cribs or granaries on the premises, the cash rent to be paid October 1, 1904. By the terms of the lease the plaintiff also reserved to himself and his employees the right to enter upon the land for the purpose of cultivating, harvesting or doing anything necessary to preserve the crops or promote the growth; the expense in that behalf to be a lien on the defendant's share of the crops. A like

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reservation was made for the purpose of making inspection of the premises, improvements thereon, and to plow for future crops. The lease also contains a provision requiring the defendant to destroy all cockle burrs on the premises before they produced seed. The following is also a part of the lease: "And it is further covenanted and agreed by and between the parties hereto that the parties of the second part shall secure the performance of the terms and conditions of this lease on their part by giving to the first party, on demand, a chattel mortgage upon all or any part of the crops growing or gathered on said premises during the said term, and if the said second parties shall refuse or neglect to give such chattel mortgage upon demand, or if they shall at any time give or attempt to give any other person or persons any lien upon said crops, or any part thereof, then this lease shall thereby terminate, and the said party may at once recover possession of said premises and all crops thereon, and the said second parties shall in that event be held and considered to have planted and cultivated said crop for the benefit of the said first party, and shall be paid for such services as follows: Said first party may sell said crop and the unexpired term for cash at a private sale, or he may, at his option, procure said crops to be further cultivated, or gathered and sold in such market as he may see fit, and in either event the proceeds thereof shall be applied, first, to the payment of expenses incurred by the said first party in the premises, including the time spent by him in connection therewith; second, to the payment of said rent; third, the remainder, if any, shall be paid to the second parties for their services in planting and tending said crops, and seed furnished by them."

In September, 1904, the plaintiff filed his petition against the defendants, in which he set forth the lease; that he had performed his part thereof; and further alleged, in substance, that the defendants refuse to permit him to enter upon the premises for the purposes mentioned in the lease, and will continue to do so unless restrained by the

court; that they have neglected and refused, and still neglect and refuse, to execute a chattel mortgage on the crops as required by the terms of the lease, although demand therefor had been duly made by the plaintiff, and have neglected to destroy the cockle burrs growing upon the land, and have refused to permit the plaintiff to enter upon the premises for that purpose; that they have threatened to remove their share of the crops from the land, leaving the plaintiff's share unharvested and uncared for, making it necessary for the plaintiff to enter upon said premises and to harvest the same at his own expense; that the defendants are insolvent and the plaintiff has no adequate remedy at law for their failure to keep and perform their part of the said lease. The prayer is for an injunction restraining the defendants from preventing plaintiff's entry upon the lands for the purposes mentioned in the lease and for specific performance.

A temporary order was allowed, after which the defendants answered. The answer admits the execution of the lease, the refusal of the defendants to execute the chattel mortgage therein provided for, but, as their reasons for such refusal, it is alleged that plaintiff's demand therefor fixed no amount for which the mortgage should be given, and that the defendants had complied with all the conditions of the lease, and had delivered to the plaintiff his share of the crop, except such as at the commencement of the suit were not matured. All allegations in the petition not admitted by the answer are denied. The defendant Lewis G. Manners alleges in avoidance of the lease that he is a minor under the age of 21 years. The plaintiff filed a reply which may be called a general denial.

The court found generally for the plaintiff, but also found that the liability to him under the lease would not exceed \$175; that the same would be sufficiently secured by a lien on 500 bushels of the corn on the premises, and that the defendant Lewis G. Manners was a minor under the age of 21 years. A decree was entered enjoining the defendants from interfering with the plaintiff's entry upon

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the land for the purposes mentioned in the lease, from disposing of the 500 bushels of corn, and requiring the defendant William H. Manners to execute a chattel mortgage thereon to the plaintiff as the security mentioned in the lease. The defendants appeal.

The principal contention of the appellants amounts to this, that the pleadings and the evidence are not sufficient to entitle the plaintiff to relief by injunction. This contention is based on three propositions, the first of which is that the plaintiff had an adequate remedy at law. The petition shows that the plaintiff had reserved the right to enter upon the premises from time to time for the purpose of inspecting them, making improvements, and preparing the ground for another crop; that the defendants, by threats of personal violence and intimidation, prevented him from coming on the premises for those purposes; that the defendants had agreed to give him a chattel mortgage on the crop to secure the rent and other liabilities growing out of the lease, and that they had not only refused to do so, but were threatening to remove a large portion of the crops and allow the remainder to stand unharvested, and that the defendants are insolvent. The evidence is amply sufficient to warrant a finding of each of the foregoing facts, and those facts are sufficient to show that the plaintiff was threatened with injuries which could not be adequately compensated in damages and which would be difficult to measure by any pecuniary standard, and that the damages, even if ascertainable, could not be collected because of the insolvency of the defendants. Such injuries are irreparable within the meaning of the law authorizing the issuance of an injunction. *Eidemiller Ice Co. v. Guthrie*, 42 Neb. 238.

It is further insisted that when the defendant refused to execute the chattel mortgage the lease by its terms expired, and the plaintiff could have proceeded at law for the recovery of the possession. But, in view of the injuries threatened, ordinary proceedings at law, in our opinion, would not have been sufficiently prompt to afford an

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adequate remedy. Before his rights could have been established at law, the crop might have been destroyed, removed from the premises, waste committed, the time for preparing the soil for another crop past, or the plaintiff irreparably damaged in other ways, which a court of law would be powerless to prevent.

Another proposition advanced in support of the contention that the plaintiff was not entitled to relief by injunction is thus stated in defendants' brief: "The lease upon which this action is based and predicated is the joint obligation of the appellants, possessing none of the elements of a joint and several contract. Severalty cannot, by any process of either construction or interpretation, be read into it, and, hence, a valid defense by one obligor inures to the benefit of the other, particularly where such defense was known to the party seeking its enforcement at the time of its execution." The learned gentleman advancing this proposition does not overlook the exception to the rule there stated, which is that, where one of two joint obligors is an infant, a recovery may be had against the other, and a discharge as to the infant. *Cutts v. Gordon*, 13 Me. 474, 29 Am. Dec. 520, and cases cited. He insists that the exception does not apply in this case, because the plaintiff knew of the infancy of one of the defendants when the lease was made. In support of this contention he cites several cases from this court, not one of which, however, goes beyond the proposition that the contract of an infant is voidable. None of them tend, even remotely, to support his contention that the exception above referred to does not apply in this case, nor have we been able to find any that so hold. On principle we can see no good reason why the exception does not apply in this case.

The third proposition, as we understand it, is that the injunction against Lewis G. Manners is erroneous because of his infancy. Counsel says: "The contract of an infant, being voidable at his election, cannot be made the superstructure (foundation) of an injunction." The law per-

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mits infancy to be used as a shield, but not as a sword. The infant defendant, with his codefendant, is in possession by virtue of the lease. His infancy may protect him from the terms of the contract, but it certainly is not a license to use the advantages he obtained by virtue of his contract to commit torts and inflict injuries upon the plaintiff for which the law affords no adequate remedy. The decree does not undertake to bind him by the terms of the contract; it merely enjoins him from the doing of certain acts which would be wrongful if the contract were binding and in force, and *a fortiori* wrongful, if he be regarded as a mere trespasser instead of a tenant under a valid lease. The decree, in our opinion, was drawn with a careful regard for the rights of all the parties. It requires the adult defendant to do less than agreed to do, and enjoins neither from doing anything he has a lawful right to do; it enjoins no affirmative duty whatever upon the infant defendant.

It is recommended that the decree be affirmed.

JACKSON, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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NEBRASKA MERCANTILE MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY V.  
WILBER W. MYERS.

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,207.

**Instructions: PREPONDERANCE OF EVIDENCE.** A preponderance of the evidence is all that is required to establish a disputed fact in a civil action, and an instruction which informs the jury that, if upon any reasonable hypothesis a fact can be accounted for upon any other theory than a dishonest one, they should so find, is a violation of that rule, and in this case reversible error.

ERROR to the district court for Boone county: JAMES R. HANNA, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

*E. M. Coffin, E. J. Clements, M. W. McGan and A. E. Garten*, for plaintiff in error.

*H. C. Vail and J. S. Armstrong, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

This is a proceeding to reverse the judgment of the trial court rendered in an action on a fire insurance policy. Two defenses were tendered by the answer: First, that when the policy was applied for the insured represented that the property was unincumbered, while in fact it was incumbered by a chattel mortgage securing an indebtedness of \$2,200, and that by the terms of the contract such misrepresentation rendered the policy void; and, second, that the fire was caused by the wilful, intentional and wrongful act of the insured. By the reply it was admitted that the representation as to the incumbrance on the property was made, but denied that the representation was false; and, pleading to the charge that the fire was caused by his wilful, intentional and wrongful act, the allegation is: "Plaintiff denies that the fire which destroyed all the property described in the plaintiff's petition, which was destroyed, was caused by the wilful, intentional or wrongful act of the plaintiff." The trial resulted in a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff.

The property destroyed was a livery barn (on leased ground), two stallions, other horses, and such property as is usually kept in a livery barn. It appears that the plaintiff purchased the barn of one Culver in the latter part of March, 1902; that on the 2d day of that month Culver gave a chattel mortgage to the First National Bank of Albion, securing an indebtedness to that bank upon the property sold to the plaintiff, and other property retained by him. The mortgage was not of record at

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the time of the sale. Soon afterwards, however, the bank placed the mortgage on file. After the existence of the mortgage had been established at the trial, the cashier of the bank was called as a witness on behalf of the plaintiff, and testified that immediately after the mortgage was filed the plaintiff came in and objected to their holding the mortgage on the barn, as he had purchased it and paid for it, and they told him that they didn't wish to cancel the mortgage because it covered other property they wished to hold; that they had no lien on the barn and didn't care to hold a lien on it; that after some other talk the plaintiff said he was satisfied, and he would come in later with Culver, and he stated it as his recollection that the plaintiff required a bond from Culver to hold him harmless. Under this state of facts, we think the jury were justified in finding that the insurance company was not prejudiced by the representations of the insured at the time he applied for the policy. The plaintiff had a right to rely upon the statement of the officers of the bank that they claimed no lien on the barn, in view of the fact that the mortgage was not of record when he procured the title.

It is urged, however, that the denial of the charge that the fire was caused by the wilful, intentional and wrongful act of the insured amounted to an admission that the insured caused the fire, and that the denial was only as to the purpose and intent; that evidence was introduced tending to show that the circumstances under which the fire occurred pointed to the plaintiff as having set the fire purposely. The plaintiff testified in his own behalf that he did not set the fire, and after the verdict of the jury had been returned the defendant presented a motion for a judgment notwithstanding the verdict. While that motion was pending, the plaintiff asked leave of the court to amend his reply by alleging that the fire was not caused by any act of the plaintiff. This application was denied; the motion for a judgment notwithstanding the verdict overruled and judgment entered on the verdict. That the

pleading is susceptible of the construction placed upon it by the defendant is doubtless true, but the trial court might reasonably, within the exercise of a sound discretion, have permitted the amendment to be made. We have concluded that the judgment must be reversed for other reasons, and think that before the case again proceeds to trial the amendment suggested ought to be allowed.

The court instructed the jury: "You are instructed that the law presumes every one to be honest and upright in all their transactions until the contrary be proved, and so in every case you should endeavor to reconcile the facts with such theory, if it can be reasonably done; and in considering evidence, if upon any reasonable hypothesis a fact can be accounted for upon any other theory than a dishonest one, you should so find." To the giving of this instruction the defendant excepted, and now insists that it was prejudicial error. We think that the objection to the instruction was well taken. All that the law requires in a civil action is that a disputed fact be established by a preponderance of the evidence. The language employed would be appropriate to an instruction in a criminal case, where the jury is required, before conviction, to be satisfied to the exclusion of every reasonable doubt; but the doctrine of reasonable doubt does not enter into the trial of a civil action. This instruction was doubtless intended to apply to the charge that the fire was caused by the wilful, intentional and wrongful act of the insured, and the jury might well infer that they were justified in finding that the fire was not so caused, if the fire could be explained upon any other reasonable hypothesis. Such is not the law in civil actions.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and that the cause be remanded for a new trial, with instructions to permit the amendment to the reply requested by the plaintiff.

ALBERT, C., concurs.

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial, with instructions to permit the amendment to the reply requested by the plaintiff.

REVERSED.

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**NUCKOLLS COUNTY V. GUTHRIE & COMPANY.**

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,241.

**Mandamus: CANALS: BRIDGES.** Where water is diverted from its natural channel by means of a canal constructed and operated to supply power for a mill, it is the duty of the mill owner to erect and maintain suitable bridges for the convenience of the public at any point where the canal crosses a public road, and mandamus will lie to compel the performance of that duty.

**ERROR to the district court for Nuckolls county: LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE.** *Reversed with directions.*

*J. H. Broady and E. D. Brown, for plaintiff in error.*

*R. D. Sutherland and S. W. Christy, contra.*

**JACKSON, C.**

The county of Nuckolls instituted an action in the district court for that county, praying for a writ of mandamus to compel the defendant to erect and maintain bridges across a canal, used by the defendant for the purpose of supplying water-power used in the operation of a mill at Superior, at three points where the canal is crossed by public highways. The defenses interposed are of two classes, technical and those affecting the merits.

The Republican river approaches the town of Superior from the west, and at a point apparently somewhat west of the town turns to the south and forms what might be termed an ox-bow. Lost creek, a dry run, approaches

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Superior from the northwest. Its course, as it approaches the river west of Superior, is southward until it reaches the bottom-lands adjacent to the river when, in an irregular course, it extends eastward and enters the Republican river on the east side of the ox-bow. The testimony discloses that originally there was no water in Lost creek, except in case of freshet or excessive rains, when it sometimes overflowed its banks and extended out over the bottom-lands. In 1874 the firm of Schuyler & Barnes erected a flouring-mill at Superior, and for the purpose of supplying the power for the operation of the mill, dug a ditch from the west side of the ox-bow on the Republican river eastward into Lost creek, and diverted water from the river into Lost creek, and thence through the original location of Lost creek to their power. During a freshet the canal dug by them was filled with quicksand. They took down their mill and sold the site which was acquired by Guthrie Brothers, a partnership, in 1877, who that year erected a new mill, deepened and widened the canal from the Republican river to Lost creek, and have since operated their mill by means of the power diverted in that way from the river. Three public roads cross this canal. The county of Nuckolls constructed bridges on those highways, one on a section line road between sections 35 and 36, in township 1, range 7, in 1874, while Schuyler & Barnes were building the canal from the Republican river into Lost creek; one on a half section line road running north and south through section 35, in 1879; and one on a half section line road running north and south through section 36, in 1881. They were all built originally on the banks of Lost creek, but the channel has widened, necessitating the building of approaches, or bridges of additional length. The bridge on the half section line running through section 35 was at one time a quarter of a mile south of where it is now located. In 1881, however, Guthrie Brothers dug a new channel across a bend in Lost creek, and diverted the water from the original channel to the new one, so that the bridge as

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now located is not on the original banks of Lost creek, but is at a point where, so far as the record discloses, no bridge was necessary until the new channel was cut in 1881.

It is alleged in the answer of the defendant that, before cutting the new channel, they entered into an agreement with the board of county commissioners of Nuckolls county, by the terms of which, when the new channel was made, Guthrie Brothers were to move the bridge from its old foundation and erect it over the new channel, and that the bridge was thereafter to be maintained at the expense of the county. Upon that allegation of the answer the testimony is brief, and we quote it in full. Mr. Robert Guthrie, originally of the firm of Guthrie Brothers, now of the defendant corporation, testified on behalf of the defendant concerning the change of the channel in 1881: "Q. Before making the excavation, what agreement, if any, did you have with the county commissioners as to making it, and keeping up the bridge thereon or moving the bridge thereon? A. I believe that was in 1880. Q. Did you have an agreement that you refer to with the commissioners in session at the county seat, or not? A. My brother was first told by one of the county commissioners to go ahead and move the— Q. Don't tell what he told your brother. A. It was the county commissioners here at Nelson. Q. And were the commissioners in session when you made this arrangement with them? A. Yes, sir; I met them in Nelson. Q. And met them at the county seat, in session? A. Yes, sir. Q. Go ahead, Mr. Guthrie, and tell all about that agreement. A. We told them what we wanted to do, and they said it was all right, just go ahead and move it up there, that it was a better place than where it was located, the old road was swampy, and the water was coming right close to it, and people couldn't cross it without making a high grade. Q. Then, as I understand it, your agreement with the commissioners was that you should go on, or no objection would be made by any one to your making this excavation or race and

emptying and intersecting Lost creek? A. Yes, sir. Q. What was the agreement, Mr. Guthrie, about moving the bridge, if any, moving the bridge from its old position on Lost creek and locating it on the race that you were about to make? A. I presented the question to them that we was discussing about digging the race and moving the bridge, and they told me to go ahead and move it, that it would be an advantage to them as well as to us, enhance the road, renew the condition of the road. Q. And what, if any, agreement was made by the commissioners and yourself as to the maintenance of the new bridge at the new point? A. I don't remember any special agreement, only they told us it was all right, to go ahead and move the bridge. Q. And who has maintained that bridge at that point since that time? A. They always maintained it, never refused to maintain it." Two of defendant's counsel were called on behalf of the defendant and testified to having made an examination of the record of the proceedings of the board of county commissioners, and that no record could be found of any contract or agreement between the county and the defendant.

It appears that after doing business for some years as partners, Guthrie Brothers formed a corporation under the name of Guthrie & Co., and that the corporation defendant succeeded to the rights of Guthrie Brothers. There was a general finding for the defendant, and the county prosecutes error.

The statute provides that any railroad corporation, canal company, mill owner, or any person or persons who now own, or may hereafter own or operate any railroad, canal or ditch that crosses any public or private road, shall make and keep in good repair good and sufficient crossings on all such roads, including all the grading, bridges, ditches and culverts that may be necessary within their right of way. Comp. St. 1905, ch. 78, sec. 110. Construing this statute in *State v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, 29 Neb. 412, it was held that under the act it is the duty of a railroad company to make and keep in repair suitable cross-

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ings with approaches, notwithstanding the highway was laid out after the railroad was built, and that the public authorities are required to build that portion of the highway within the right of way, which they would have been required to make had the railroad not been constructed. With this construction of the statute before us, it is urged that there is no liability on the part of the defendant to construct and maintain bridges, because it is said that bridges were necessary to enable the public to cross Lost creek in any event. There is considerable merit in this contention as to the bridge on the section line between sections 35 and 36, and the one on the half section line through section 36, although the evidence impresses upon us the fact that the expense to the county of constructing and maintaining those two bridges, with the waters of the Republican river diverted into Lost creek, is greater than it would otherwise have been, and to the extent that the cost of the bridges under the present condition of the channel exceeds what it would have been, had the waters not been so diverted, the county has sustained an injury.

With the bridge on the half section line running through section 35, the conditions are entirely different. Here is a new channel created by the defendant. There is no pretense that there was any necessity for a bridge at that point prior to the time the channel was constructed. The claim of a contract with the county, under which the county was obligated to erect and maintain a bridge at that point, is entirely without support in the evidence. It does not appear that the county board ever took action, that it assumed to obligate the county in any respect. It is true that the testimony of the witness Guthrie discloses that the board was in session when he interviewed the members. The most that can be said of his evidence in that respect is that members of the board assented to the proposed change in the channel. We entertain no doubt about the liability of the defendant to erect and maintain a suitable bridge at that crossing.

But it is urged that the action was improperly brought

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in the name of the county; that an action for mandamus can only be brought on the relation of the state. This objection is not well taken. The writ of mandamus is not a prerogative writ in this country. When it is an appropriate remedy, it is issued as a matter of course at the instance of a private suitor. *First Nat. Bank v. Lancaster*, 54 Neb. 467. Furthermore, the statute under which the action is instituted requires the proceeding to be brought in the name of the county. Comp. St., ch. 78, sec. 112.

Again, it is objected that the alternative writ ran in the name of the state. That, however, is in accord with the statute. It is said that the notices served on the defendant before the commencement of the action were insufficient, because it does not appear that the defendant owns a canal or ditch. It does appear, however, that it obtained the consent of property owners along Lost creek, and that it does own the land in section 35 over which the highway runs. The objection is without force or merit.

And, finally, it is contended that the county is estopped from asserting its right, because for a period of 20 years it has kept up and maintained these bridges without any claim of liability on the part of the defendant. This contention is equally without merit. The obligation is a continuing one, and will last so long as the statute remains in force and the necessity for bridges exists. The evidence discloses that the bridges in question are in a dangerous condition and in need of immediate repair.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to enter judgment requiring the respondents to erect and maintain a suitable bridge over its canal on the half section line road running through section 35, township 1, range 7.

ALBERT, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing

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opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to enter judgment requiring the respondents to erect and maintain a suitable bridge over its canal on the half section line road running through section 35, township 1, range 7.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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EASTERN BUILDING & LOAN ASSOCIATION, APPELLANT, V.  
JOHN TONKINSON ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED APRIL 18, 1906. No. 14,272.

1. Foreign Corporations: Contracts. A contract with a foreign building and loan association authorized to transact business in this state at the time the contract is made does not become unenforceable by reason of the failure of the association to renew its authority to transact business in the state.
2. Contracts: Usury. In determining whether a contract with a foreign building and loan association is usurious, it is proper to consider only such payments contracted for as are in the nature of interest and premiums on the loan.

APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:  
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

A. W. Lane, for appellant.

Fred L. Sumpster and O. B. Polk, contra.

JACKSON, C.

The plaintiff is a building and loan association organized under the laws of New York and a resident of that state. On September 8, 1891, it complied with the provisions of the laws of this state relative to foreign building and loan associations, and procured from the state banking board a certificate authorizing it to transact business within the state. This authority was renewed on February 5, 1892,

and continued until January 31, 1893. In October, 1892, Adam Snyder, a resident of Lancaster county, became a shareholder in the plaintiff association and procured a loan from the plaintiff, secured by a mortgage on real estate owned by him and an assignment of his shares of stock. Upon the termination of the plaintiff's license in January, 1893, the plaintiff failed to meet the requirements of the statute and thereafter procured no authority from the banking board, such as is contemplated by law. Snyder made the payments provided for by the terms of his contract with the plaintiff for a time, and then defaulted. In September, 1896, a representative of the plaintiff called on Snyder, in Nebraska, for the purpose of securing, if possible, an adjustment of his loan, but it appears that Snyder was unable to make settlement and that foreclosure proceedings were likely to follow. This fact having been brought to the attention of John Tonkinson, who is a relative of Snyder and to whom Snyder was indebted, an arrangement was entered into whereby Snyder conveyed the real estate covered by plaintiff's mortgage to Tonkinson, and for the purpose of adjusting the indebtedness secured by the mortgage Tonkinson applied to the plaintiff to become a shareholder in that association and for an adjustment of the old mortgage indebtedness by giving a new mortgage on the real estate for the unpaid balance. This application was forwarded to the plaintiff's office in New York state and was there approved. The matter of the application to readjust the Snyder loan was presented to the Nebraska state banking board which adopted a resolution expressly authorizing the readjustment sought. Plaintiff issued its certificates of stock to the defendant Tonkinson, which, when matured, would be of the par value of \$1,100. They prepared and forwarded to Nebraska for execution by the defendant Tonkinson and his wife a mortgage on the real estate, together with an assignment of the stock contracted for by Tonkinson. These papers were duly executed and forwarded to the plaintiff. Authority was given by Tonkinson to apply the proceeds of the new

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mortgage, \$1,100, in liquidation of the indebtedness of Snyder, it having been agreed that the plaintiff would accept that sum and release the Snyder mortgage. The plaintiff canceled the Snyder papers, and they were returned to him.

The stock contract between the plaintiff and defendant Tonkinson provided for monthly payments of \$6.60 on the part of Tonkinson, until the monthly payments so made, together with the dividends declared by the plaintiff thereon, should equal the par value of the stock. The mortgage contained this provision: "Now, if the above bounden John Tonkinson, or his heirs, executors or administrators, shall well and truly pay or cause to be paid in gold coin of the United States of America of the present standard of weight and fineness unto the above named Eastern Building & Loan Association of Syracuse, N. Y., its certain attorney, successors or assigns, at its office in the city of Syracuse, N. Y., the sum of \$1,100 so advanced or loaned as aforesaid, in the manner following, viz: The sum of \$6.60 the monthly instalment or dues on the aforesaid shares, payable as aforesaid on or before the date of said shares, and on or before the first business day of each and every month thereafter, and, in addition thereto, interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum and a regular monthly premium of \$2.75, payable monthly from October 1, 1896, making in all the sum of \$14.85 for instalments, interest and premium, which shall be paid monthly as aforesaid to said association at its office in the city of Syracuse, N. Y., until the maturity of said shares, being for such a term as will secure to said obligor the payment of the full sum of \$100 on each of said shares of stock from the monthly instalments paid thereon and dividends credited thereto in accordance with the provisions of the articles of incorporation, by-laws, rules and regulations of said association, and shall also pay or cause to be paid all fines which may be imposed by said association for default in payment of said instalments, dues, interest or premium, or for default in paying any insurance premium

or taxes, hereinafter referred to, and shall also well and truly keep and perform all of the covenants and agreements herein contained and the requirements of said certificate of stock, and the articles of incorporation, by-laws, rules and regulations of said association, and any lawful amendments thereof, which said certificate of stock, articles, by-laws, rules and regulations, together with the application for said loan, are hereby made a part of this obligation, then this obligation to be void, otherwise to remain in full force and virtue." Tonkinson made payments, including the payments on stock, interest and premium provided by the conditions of the mortgage, amounting in all, as appears from the record, to the sum of \$712.80, when he defaulted, and the plaintiff instituted this action in the district court to foreclose the mortgage.

The answer tendered two defenses: First, that the plaintiff was without authority under the law of this state to enter into a contract with Snyder; and, second, that the contract was usurious. In the court below the determination was that the plaintiff had authority to enter into the contract and that it was valid as against that objection; but that the contract was usurious, and the defendant was credited with the total payments made by him on the principal of the loan and decree entered for \$387.20, the balance found due. Both parties appealed.

The plaintiff complains of the decree wherein it is determined that the contract is usurious, and the defendant appeals from the decree in so far as it is found that the plaintiff was authorized to enter into the contract. It appears without question that the plaintiff met fully all the requirements of the statute at the time it obtained its certificate from the state banking board in 1891, and that the certificate was renewed by the banking board; that the renewal carried with it on the face of the certificate authority to continue in business until January 31, 1893. It is urged, however, on behalf of the defendant, that at the time of the renewal the plaintiff failed to file with the banking board the statement required by sections 148a

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and 148b, ch. 16, Comp. St. 1891, in force at that time. In support of that contention the secretary of the banking board at the time of the trial was called as a witness, and from his testimony it appears that he had then been secretary of the board for about three years and a half (the trial was in October, 1904); that he had made search for the application upon which the order of February, 1892, was based, and had failed to find it. It appears, however, from his further examination that the only record of such applications kept by the board in 1891 and 1892 was by the filing marks and indorsements on the application itself, and that if the application was lost or mislaid there would be no record in his office of any such application; that the applications were not indexed, and that some of the papers were not even marked "filed," and that there was nothing in his office to show whether such an application had been filed or not. The presumption is that the officers of the state board performed their duty, and we do not feel justified in disturbing the finding of the trial court that the evidence fails to overcome that presumption, and we conclude that at the time the Snyder loan was made the plaintiff was authorized to transact business in the state, and that his contract was enforceable. The contract having been valid at its inception and enforceable under the laws of the state, the fact that the plaintiff thereafter withdrew from the state so far as the transaction of new business was concerned would not prevent the enforcement of the contract. *Rhodes v. Missouri Savings & Loan Co.*, 63 Ill. App. 77. The transactions between the plaintiff and defendant, Tonkinson, amounted to a readjustment of the mortgage indebtedness on the real estate when Tonkinson acquired the title, and do not, in our judgment, come within the ban of the statute.

The issue tendered by the plea of usury is a troublesome one. We are convinced, however, that the plea of usury ought not to be sustained. It is urged by the plaintiff that the contract is a New York contract and that under the law of that state was not usurious. We have con-

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cluded, however, to base our opinion upon another ground suggested by authority cited in behalf of the association. The contract in suit is to some extent twofold in its nature. Tonkinson first became a subscriber for certain shares of stock, upon which he agreed to pay monthly the sum of \$6.60 until the payments made by him, together with the dividends declared by the company and credited to the stock, should amount to the sum of \$1,100, when, in the absence of the loan feature, he would have been entitled to withdraw that sum in cash. He, however, contracted for a loan of \$1,100 and secured the payment of that amount by mortgage upon real estate. He might lawfully contract to pay 10 per cent. interest on the loan, or \$110 a year. What he did contract to pay was interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, payable in monthly instalments, and a monthly premium of \$2.75, amounting in all to \$105 a year. The by-laws of the association required that, where money was advanced on loans made to its shareholders, the stock of the association held by the borrower should be assigned to the association as additional security, one share of stock for each \$100 borrowed, and it will be observed from the conditions of the mortgage that the contract between the parties was that, when the stock so assigned should have matured, if the payments of interest and premium were fully kept up, the amount due on the stock should be applied to cancel the mortgage indebtedness. The question then arises whether we are justified, under the circumstances, in holding that the payments on the stock contract should be considered in determining whether the contract for the loan was usurious, as it must be conceded that the interest payments and premium provided for do not exceed the amount which the parties might lawfully contract for as interest. This identical question was before the supreme court of the United States in *Bedford v. Eastern Building & Loan Ass'n*, reported in 181 U. S. 227; 21 Sup. Ct. Rep. 597. Mr. Justice McKenna, who delivered the opinion of the court, said:

"It is claimed, however, that if the transactions between

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Bedford and the association were otherwise legal they were affected with usury, and to the extent that they were usurious they were unenforceable. The contention is that in making the loan of \$4,600 Bedford was required to pay a fixed premium of \$460, and received only \$4,140, and that this constituted usury in Tennessee. This is made out, because, it is said, Bedford was required to withdraw his stock and receipt in full, and could therefore get no benefit from future profits of the association, and, it is asserted, that thereby the loan became 'fixed and certain, and no element of contingency' remained, and the transactions are withdrawn from the principle expressed in *Spain v. Hamilton*, 1 Wall. 604, that 'where the promise to pay a sum above legal interest depends upon a contingency, and not upon the happening of a certain event, the loan is not usurious.' But the fact is not as asserted. The stock was pledged as security for the advance; and the pledge was no more a withdrawal of the stock, terminating Bedford's ownership of it, than his mortgage was an absolute conveyance of his land. It is provided in section 3, article 19, that in addition to real estate security for a loan a shareholder shall 'transfer in pledge to the association one share of the stock held by said shareholder, as collateral security, on all loans made by the association' to him."

The conclusion we have reached is in harmony with our holding in *Anselme v. American Savings & Loan Ass'n*, 66 Neb. 520. There the borrower was required to take out 30 shares of stock, upon which the company demanded monthly payments amounting to \$18. He borrowed \$1,500 upon which he contracted to pay interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum, payable in monthly instalments. We found, however, that 15 shares of the stock subscribed for by the shareholder in that case were required to be taken out by him and payments made thereon as a premium on the loan, and that all payments made on those shares would be retained by the company as payment of the premium, and that therefore the borrower paid, in addition to \$7.50 a month interest, \$9 a month premium, or a total of \$16.50

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a month interest and premium on the loan, something over 13 per cent. per annum; so that in determining the question of usury in that case we did not consider payments on that portion of the stock which at its maturity would be applied to liquidate the face of the loan.

We conclude that the trial court erroneously determined that the contract was tainted with usury, and we recommend that the decree be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to the district court to enter a decree in conformity with this opinion.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to enter a decree in conformity with this opinion.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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#### LINCOLN BUTTER COMPANY v. EDWARDS-BRADFORD LUMBER COMPANY.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,160.

1. **Corporations: Actions.** After the dissolution of a corporation by the expiration of its franchise, or otherwise, an action may be maintained in the corporate name upon a cause of action which accrued to the corporation.
2. ——: **ATTACHMENT: ESTOPPEL.** When the required number of individuals attempt in good faith to organize a corporation, and for that purpose sign articles of incorporation which contain substantially the provisions required by statute, and file the same with the county clerk of the proper county and proceed to do business as a corporation in the name adopted by the articles, one who transacts business with such company in its corporate name will not be allowed to deny its existence as a corporation *de facto*; and if, in an action against the company in its corporate name, he attaches its property upon a claim arising from business so transacted, he will not be allowed to deny that the business of the company was conducted by it in its corporate capacity.

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ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*John S. Bishop* and *Charles O. Whedon*, for plaintiff in error.

*Tibbets & Anderson* and *Talbot & Allen*, contra.

SEDGWICK, C. J.

The determination of this case depends upon the capacity of the plaintiff to maintain the suit. The plaintiff in its petition in the court below alleged that it is a corporation, and it began this action as such. The evidence shows that three individuals in Lancaster county prepared and signed articles of incorporation. These articles of incorporation they filed for record in the office of the county clerk of Lancaster county, and proceeded at once to transact business in the corporate name adopted by the articles. The articles provided that "the nature of the business to be transacted by said corporation shall be the buying, reworking, making butter from cream and selling butter, and handling eggs, game or produce as may be deemed necessary, also the erection and maintenance of such buildings and structures as may be deemed necessary and to purchase real estate as a sight (site) therefor." By-laws for the government of the corporation were also prepared and signed by two of the individuals who executed the articles of incorporation. The capital stock authorized by the articles was \$1,000, in shares of \$50 each "to be subscribed and paid as required by the board of directors." There is no evidence when or by whom this stock or any part of it was subscribed and paid for. There is no evidence of any meeting of the stockholders or any election of officers. Mr. Robertson, who was one of the parties who executed the articles, is shown by the record to have acted as manager for the company. He purchased a creamery outfit and removed it to Brock, where he commenced transacting business in the name adopted by the articles, the "Lincoln

Butter Company." He employed "a butter worker," and appears to have transacted a considerable business until a few months later when the attachment proceedings herein-after referred to were begun. Mr. Neuman, from whom the creamery outfit was purchased, testified that Mr. Robertson represented himself to the witness as the Lincoln Butter Company, and that Mr. Robertson afterwards took possession of the machinery for the Lincoln Butter Company. A note and chattel mortgage were given for the purchase of the machinery. These papers were executed by Mr. Robertson and the Lincoln Butter Company was not named therein. To explain this fact, Mr. Robertson testifies that the parties from whom he purchased required the papers to be so executed because they thought that the securities would be better if executed by an individual than if given by a corporation.

The articles of incorporation were not filed with the secretary of state, nor was the statutory notice of incorporation published. When the foregoing facts appeared in evidence, the defendant moved to dismiss the case "for the reason that it is shown by the evidence and admissions already made that the corporation that purports to sue in this case as plaintiff was never legally organized, and never became a *de jure* or *de facto* corporation, and for the further reason that the evidence shows that the corporate existence, if it had any corporate existence, has expired." The plaintiff then made extensive and various offers of proof. Among other things offered in evidence was a certified transcript of the record of the proceedings in justice court in which the defendant had procured an attachment against the plaintiff herein, and had caused the property of the plaintiff to be attached. It was to recover damages arising from this attachment that this action was brought. The evidence offered showed that this defendant had begun an action against the plaintiff in justice court, in which it filed an affidavit for attachment against the "Lincoln Butter Co. and W. M. Robertson, Jr., M'gr." The ground for attachment alleged in the affidavit was "that the de-

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fendant is about to convert his property or a part thereof for the purpose of defrauding his creditors." This evidence was excluded by the court and all of the other evidence offered by the plaintiff was also excluded. The reason given by the court for this ruling was entered upon the record in the following language: "For the reasons given in the objection to the testimony, and it appearing to the court that this suit was not begun until January 22, 1903, after the corporation was dissolved by operation of law, the objection is sustained." The objection of the defendant referred to had been renewed and restated in these words: "The defendant objects to the offer made for the reason the petition fails to state a cause of action in favor of the plaintiff and against the defendant; for the further reason that upon the evidence already adduced and admissions of counsel it is shown that the plaintiff never had at any time a legal corporate existence and had no capacity to sue. Furthermore, upon the evidence already adduced, it is shown that the charter, if any ever existed, of the plaintiff has expired; that there is a defect of parties plaintiff, and that the plaintiff has no standing in court to bring the action set forth in plaintiff's petition." The articles of incorporation provided that the corporate franchise should continue two years, which time had expired when the action was begun, and this is the principal reason given by the court for sustaining the objection. Of course, the fact that the time specified for the existence of the corporation had expired would furnish no grounds for the ruling of the court. Section 67, ch. 16, Comp. St. 1905, provides: "Any corporation created by this chapter may, at any time after its dissolution, whether such dissolution occur by the expiration of its charter or otherwise, prosecute any suit at law or in equity, in and by the corporate name of such dissolved corporation, for the use of the party entitled to receive the proceeds of any such suit, upon any and all causes of action accrued, or which, but for such dissolution, would have accrued in favor of such corporation, in the same manner and with the like effect as if such corpora-

tion were not dissolved." The fact, however, that the trial court gave an insufficient reason for its ruling will not render that ruling erroneous, and the question is whether the ruling can be supported by any reason. If the evidence offered, together with that already given, would show the competency of the plaintiff to maintain this action against the defendant, the ruling of the court was erroneous.

Section 144, ch. 16, Comp. St. 1905, provides: "No body of men acting as a corporation under the provisions of this subdivision shall be permitted to set up the want of legal organization as a defense to any action brought against them as a corporation; nor shall any person sued on a contract made with such corporation, or for an injury to the property of such corporation, be permitted to set up the want of legal organization in defense of such action." It is urged that corporate existence is not established by proof of acts of the members that are as consistent with the existence of an unincorporated association as of a corporation. There is no doubt of this proposition. It is clearly stated in *Fredenburg v. Lyon Lake M. E. Church*, 37 Mich. 476. All that was shown in that case was that the associates held the ordinary meetings of a religious society, and that they elected officers; among which was the plaintiff, as treasurer. There was no evidence that any articles of incorporation had ever been signed by the associates and filed for record in the public office prescribed by law. The court said:

"Indeed, the evidence in the court below, taken together, tended very strongly to show that no corporation had ever been formed, and that the associates had not seen fit to avail themselves of the authority of the statute for that purpose."

In the case at bar it is clearly shown that the associates attempted to avail themselves of the authority of the statute. They appear to have acted in good faith, though mistakenly, in their attempts to form a *de jure* corporation. After they had so imperfectly organized, they began doing

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business in the name of the supposed corporation, and, while it may be true that this business might have been done in that way without incorporation, we think, in view of the provisions of the statute above quoted, one who had prosecuted an action against them in that corporate name, and in that action had attached their property, could not be heard, in an action for damages arising out of such attachment, to allege that the business had not been conducted as corporate business, and that the transactions which were suitable and proper to a corporate existence were not had and done by the plaintiff in its corporate capacity. After the court had excluded the evidence referred to, the jury were instructed to render a verdict in favor of the defendant. This verdict, for the reasons above given, cannot be sustained.

The judgment of the district court is reversed, and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

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IN RE DISBARMENT PROCEEDINGS OF WILLIAM L. NEWBY.

FILED MAY 8, 1906. No. 14,320.

1. **Attorneys: Disbarment.** If proceedings for disbarment are begun against an attorney at law based solely upon a charge of crime against the laws of this state, which is not admitted by the accused, this court will not, ordinarily, investigate the facts constituting the alleged crime while the matter is pending upon indictment in the district court.
2. \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_. If the charge upon which disbarment proceedings are based involves professional misconduct in the relations of an attorney at law with the court in which he practices, that court may, upon satisfactory proof, disbar the attorney from practicing before it.
3. \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_. This court alone can pass upon the qualifications of applicants for admission to the bar, and has sole power to annul such admission.

ERROR to the district court for Saline county: **LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE.** *Judgment, as modified, affirmed.*

*W. L. Newby, W. G. Hastings and A. G. Wolfenbarger,*  
for William L. Newby.

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, W. T. Thompson and*  
*Joshua Palmer, for the state.*

**SEDGWICK, C. J.**

Proceedings were begun in the district court for Saline county to disbar William L. Newby, an attorney at law practicing in that court. The complaint filed charged that an action was begun in that court to foreclose a tax lien upon certain real estate situated in that county, and in that action Charles E. Jennings, who then appeared by the records of the county to have the legal title to the real estate in question, was made defendant, the plaintiff at the time supposing that the said Jennings was living; that in fact the said Jennings was before that time deceased; that the said Jennings was a resident of Oklahoma territory some time before his decease, and died there, and an administrator of his estate was there appointed, and that William L. Newby filed a petition in intervention for one Melinda H. Smiley, alleging that the said Smiley was the owner in fee of the real estate in question; that after the decease of said Jennings the said Newby appeared before a notary public of Logan county in the territory of Oklahoma and pretended that he, the said Newby, was Charles E. Jennings, and there executed and acknowledged a deed in the name of Charles E. Jennings purporting to convey the real estate in question to the said Smiley, and "forged the name of said Charles E. Jennings to said deed," and that the said Newby, knowing that the said Jennings was deceased, appeared in the said action as the attorney of said Jennings, and also as the attorney of said Smiley; that he filed various papers in said cause to which he signed the name of said Jennings, and that the said proceedings on the part of said Newby were done by him for the purpose of deceiving the court as well as the parties to

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the litigation, and to make it appear that the said Smiley was the owner of the real estate in question, and that he was the authorized attorney for the said Jennings, well knowing at the time that the deed aforesaid was a forgery, and that the said Jennings was dead at the time he so appeared. The complaint recites that defendant filed an attorney's lien in said cause and signed the same as attorney for said Jennings. To this complaint Newby filed an answer in which he admitted the allegations in regard to the commencement of the tax foreclosure proceedings, and admitted that he appeared for Melinda H. Smiley and filed a petition in intervention, and acted for her therein, and filed an attorney's lien in said cause "on the 19th day of February, 1904, as the same appears of record and in the files of this court," and denied the other allegations of the complaint. The court appointed a committee of three members of the bar "to ascertain and report the facts." This committee afterwards reported to the court the following findings:

- (1) We find that there is an action pending in the district court for Saline county, Nebraska, wherein Ella A. Taylor is plaintiff and Charles E. Jennings et al. are defendants, to foreclose a tax lien on lots Nos. 144 and 145 in R. S. Bentley's addition to the town of Friend, Nebraska.
- (2) That this respondent appeared in said action as attorney for Charles E. Jennings, defendant, and Melinda H. Smiley as intervenor. That his appearance for Charles E. Jennings was without authority.
- (3) That Charles E. Jennings died at Lawton, Oklahoma territory, October 13, 1902, seized in fee simple of lots Nos. 144 and 145 in R. S. Bentley's addition to the town of Friend, Nebraska.
- (4) That at the time the respondent filed the petition of intervention in said action for Melinda H. Smiley he well knew that the deed pretending to convey to her the lots in question was not a true deed.
- That on the 15th day of June, 1903, the respondent appeared before one Elmer J. Garner, a duly qualified notary public in and for Logan county, Oklahoma territory, at the village of Coyle, in said county

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and territory, and represented himself to be Charles E. Jennings, and then and there signed and acknowledged a deed as Charles E. Jennings before said Garner as such notary public, pretending to convey lots Nos. 144 and 145 in R. S. Bentley's addition to the town of Friend, Saline county, Nebraska, to Melinda H. Smiley; and afterwards, to wit, on the 18th day of February, 1904, respondent presented said deed to Frank J. Sadilek, the register of deeds in and for Saline county, Nebraska, who afterwards recorded the same in book 47 of the deed records of Saline county, Nebraska, and on page 195 thereof; and that on the 14th day of March, 1904, said deed was in the possession of the respondent. We find that the said Melinda H. Smiley is the mother of the respondent, and is now living. We find that the respondent has been guilty of deceit to the court, and in collusion to deceive with Melinda H. Smiley.

It was, of course, unnecessary to make findings of matters admitted in the answer, or of matter shown by the files of the court in which the proceedings were pending, which were referred to and identified by the answer. Some exceptions were taken to this report of the committee, and after all objections thereto had been overruled the court entered the following order: "And on this same day this matter came on for hearing on the report of the committee heretofore filed in this case, and the court being fully advised in the premises, the court hereby approves and confirms the findings of the referees herein in all things. It is therefore considered, ordered and adjudged by the court that the said William L. Newby be debarred from all privileges as an attorney at law, and from practicing in the courts of the seventh judicial district and from the courts of the state of Nebraska, and the committee are directed to certify this order to the supreme court of the state of Nebraska." The case is in this court upon proceedings in error on the part of Newby to reverse this order of the district court.

1. The first question presented by the plaintiff in error,

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and the one most insisted upon and discussed, is whether disbarment proceedings based upon a charge of forgery can be sustained and disbarment ordered before conviction upon a criminal prosecution for forgery. In *Morton v. Watson*, 60 Neb. 672, which was a proceeding for disbarment, the court said:

"We do not hold that it is indispensable that a hearing of this nature should be suspended because a criminal prosecution is pending charging the person against whom a disbarment proceeding is being taken with the same facts until the criminal cause is terminated. A finding in a disbarment proceeding either adverse to or in favor of the person accused perhaps would in no way affect such criminal action; nor would a verdict of either guilty or not guilty in a criminal action be binding on a court in a disbarment proceeding wherein the same act is charged."

This language, however, is not to be regarded as constituting a precedent binding upon the court. We recognize the authority of the case itself, and the binding force of adjudication upon the question there involved. In that case referees were appointed by the court, who reported that a prosecution was pending in which the defendant was "under indictment or information of a criminal nature for a criminal charge" in connection with one of the specifications of the complaint upon which the disbarment proceedings were based, and the referees further reported that, for that reason, they had declined to hear evidence tending to prove the criminal charge upon which the defendant was under indictment; and the court determined the question as to whether the referees should have heard such evidence in the following words: "But we have no doubt that it was within the sound discretion of the court, and its committee, to refuse to take up the specification covered by the pending indictment until the criminal prosecution had ended." This language disposed of the question as far it was necessary to do so in the determination of that case, and we think that under the circumstances in that case this ruling was correct. We are not,

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however, prepared to say that, if an attorney at law has been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude, this court would under any circumstances continue him upon the roll of its honorable attorneys while under conviction and sentence for such crime. We think that this court would take the verdict of the jury and the judgment of the criminal court thereon as sufficient evidence of guilt and would not reinvestigate the facts.

Again, when a member of the bar of this court is charged with a crime involving moral turpitude as ground for disbarment, and the facts in relation to that crime are in process of investigation before a court constituted by the constitution for the investigation of such matters, this court would await the determination of the criminal proceedings before passing upon the question of disbarment based solely upon the alleged commission of such crime. In this case, we think the honorable referees who were appointed by the district court to investigate these charges against this defendant and who have manifested so much zeal and care in ascertaining the truth of the matter, were mistaken in supposing that it was their duty to compel the defendant himself to testify in regard to the facts tending to show his guilt of a crime which ought to be investigated by a constitutional jury. There is an exception to the rule of law which we are now expressing, as shown by the opinion of the majority of the supreme court of the United States in *Ex parte Wall*, 107 U. S. 265, 27 L. ed. 552. The opinion of the majority of the court in that case was prepared by Mr. Justice Bradley and contains an exhaustive review of the decisions of this country, and of England, and of the common law principles involved, and although his reasoning is strenuously criticised by Mr. Justice Field, in a dissenting opinion, we are satisfied to adopt the views of the majority of the court as expressed in the third paragraph of the syllabus in the following words:

"That although, in ordinary cases, where an attorney commits an indictable offense, not in his character of attorney, and does not admit the charge, the courts will not

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strike his name from the roll until he has been regularly indicted and convicted, yet that the rule is not an inflexible one; that there may be cases in which it is proper for the court to proceed without such previous conviction; and that the present case, in view of its special circumstances, the evasive denial of the charge, the clearness of the proof, and the failure to offer any counter proof, was one in which the court might lawfully exercise its summary powers."

At the time the referees took the evidence in this case no criminal prosecution had been begun against the defendant, but this fact would hardly justify the compulsory examination of the defendant under oath upon the facts, which, if proved before a jury, would convict him of forgery. So far as these proceedings rest upon a charge and evidence constituting the crime of forgery, therefore, we are satisfied that they ought not to be allowed to stand.

2. Attorneys practicing in the district courts of this state are officers of the courts in which they practice. Their position is an honorable one; they are the trusted advisers of the court. There can be no doubt that the court has ample power to protect itself against dishonorable and corrupt practitioners. "It is the duty of an attorney and counselor: (1) To maintain the respect due to the courts of justice and to judicial officers. (2) To counsel or maintain no other actions, proceedings, defenses, than those which appear to him legal and just, except the defense of a person charged with a public offense. (3) To employ for the purpose of maintaining the cause confided to him, such means only as are consistent with truth. (4) To maintain inviolate the confidence, and, at any peril to himself, to preserve the secrets of his clients. (5) To abstain from all offensive practices, and to advise no fact prejudicial to the honor or reputation of a party or witness, unless required by the justice of the cause with which he is charged. (6) Not to encourage the commencement or continuance of an action or proceeding from any motive of passion or interest. An attorney and counselor who is guilty of deceit

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or collusion, and consents thereto, with intent to deceive a court, or judge, or a party to an action or proceeding, is liable to be disbarred, and shall forfeit to the injured party treble damages, to be recovered in a civil action." Comp. St., ch. 7, secs. 5 and 6. It appears to us that there can be no doubt that the conduct of this defendant, as set forth in the charges filed against him, and established by his answer and the findings of fact by the referees, independently of the facts constituting the alleged crime of forgery, fully justifies the district court in refusing to allow him to appear as an attorney in that court.

There was an action pending in that court involving the foreclosure of a tax lien upon real estate. The defendant in that action had not been a resident of the county, but was formerly a resident of the territory of Oklahoma, and had died there a long time before the action was begun. The attorneys for the plaintiff were ignorant of the fact of the defendant's death, and so proceeded as though the defendant was living, and was a resident of Oklahoma. This defendant, knowing that the defendant in that action was deceased, and knowing that he had no authority whatever to appear for him while he was living, and of course could have no authority to so appear after his death, entered appearance in the name of the deceased defendant, and filed several papers in the case in which he, this defendant, signed the name of the deceased defendant in the action referred to. Afterwards, claiming compensation for these services as an attorney, he filed an attorney's lien against the deceased man, and undertook to establish that lien. He joined with one Smiley in an attempt to deceive the court and to lead the court to suppose that the action could proceed to an adjudication of the rights of the dead man, who had been named as defendant. He wilfully attempted to lead the court to believe that he had performed legal services in that particular action for one whom he never had authority to represent; one whom he knew was deceased at the time the action was begun, and so could not have incurred any liability to him.

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In re Disbarment Proceedings of Newby.

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as attorney; and attempted thereby to establish a false claim for services rendered as an officer of the court. Upon these facts the court made an order terminating the relations of the defendant with the court as an officer thereof, and we cannot say that the court was not justified in so doing.

3. The judgment of the court should have been limited to disbarring the defendant from practicing as an attorney in that court until further order. Our statute contains no provision for disbarment proceedings. This matter is left to the common law power and duty of the various courts. It is a principle of general, if not uniform, application that the court which is entrusted with the power and the duty of determining the qualifications for admission to the bar has, by implication, the power and duty also to determine when those qualifications are wanting, and when the privilege of that high calling has been forfeited. This court has the sole power of admission to the bar, and therefore has sole power to annul such admission when sufficient cause appears. Charges of misconduct and deceit in the district court are properly entertained and dealt with in that court. Charges of criminal or immoral conduct calling for disbarment should be addressed to this court. No doubt the formal certificate to this court of these proceedings and the conviction of the defendant upon these charges are sufficient to require this court to take action. Further proceedings in this court upon the main charge against the defendant are continued until the final determination of the criminal proceedings now pending in the district court of Saline county. When those proceedings are finally disposed of, it will be the duty of the attorney general to so inform this court, and further proceedings will then be taken thereon.

The judgment of the district court complained of is modified so as to disbar the defendant from practicing in the district court of the seventh judicial district until the further order of that court, and as so modified is

AFFIRMED.

## WILLIAM LIVINGHOUSE V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,567.

1. **Rape: Evidence.** The uncorroborated evidence of the prosecutrix is insufficient to sustain a conviction of the crime of statutory rape.
2. ——: ——. Where in such a case the testimony of the prosecutrix lacks the element of probability, and the corroborating evidence is of a doubtful character, a judgment of conviction will be set aside for want of sufficient evidence to sustain it.

ERROR to the district court for Wayne county: JOHN F. BOYD, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*F. A. Berry and Allen & Reed, for plaintiff in error.*

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson, contra.*

BARNES, J.

William Livinghouse was convicted in the district court for Wayne county of the crime of statutory rape upon the person of one Maude McRoberts, a female child under 15 years of age, and was sentenced to the state penitentiary for a term of three years. He brings the case to this court by petition in error, and will hereafter be called the accused.

His first contention is that the verdict and judgment are not supported by sufficient evidence. We shall not attempt to quote the evidence produced on the trial, but shall content ourselves with a summary statement of it. The prosecutrix testified, in substance, that she lived with her mother and step-father in Wayne county, Nebraska; that she was 15 years old on July 16, 1905; that the first time she saw the accused was in the latter part of August, 1904, when he came to her father's place to work; that she left home the following Friday and was gone two months, returning the last Saturday in October; that she was at

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home thereafter during all the time the accused worked for her father, and that he made his home there until about the time he was arrested; that she slept up-stairs, in the south room, and in the same bed with her sister Edna, there being two rooms up-stairs, and the accused slept in the north room, her parents sleeping down-stairs. She also stated that her two brothers, each 11 years old, occupied another bed in the same room with her and her sister; that the accused came into her room about midnight on or about the middle of November, 1904, got into bed with her and her sister, told her that he would not hurt her, charged her not to tell anyone, and had sexual intercourse with her; that she neither consented nor resisted; that she told no one about the matter until about the 8th day of May following, when it was discovered by others that she was pregnant; that the accused was a man over 18 and about 45 years of age; that the door between the rooms where she and the accused slept was left open at his request, because it was so warm up-stairs.

Edna McRoberts, the sister of the prosecutrix, testified that she was 13 years old, and was living at home all of the time the accused worked for her father; that he came there about the first of August, 1904; that she slept in the room with her sister every night during the month of November of that year; that she saw the accused in the room where she and her sister slept during that month, in the night-time, at least four or five times; that when he came into the room he would stand by the bed on the side where her sister slept; that he would stand there from five to ten minutes, and then go out; that he never spoke to them, and, to use her own words, "I never saw him do anything." It appears that she never told her parents, nor talked to her sister about the matter. She further testified that she was awake about midnight every night during the month of November, 1904, and she was sure of that fact because she always heard the clock strike 12.

Charles E. West, the step-father of the prosecutrix, stated that the accused was employed by him during the months

of October and November, 1904, and up to about May 8, 1905; that the defendant said to him, when he paid him his wages, which was at or about the time of his arrest: "You take the money home to the girl, she needs it worse than I do."

Mrs. Laura West, mother of the prosecutrix, testified, in substance, that Maude was 15 years old on the 16th day of July, 1905; that the accused began to work for her husband on August 24, 1904, and left their place May 8, 1905; that he was about 45 years old; that she had a conversation with him in Epler's store, in the town of Wayne, on May 8, 1905, and just before he was arrested, the substance of which she gave as follows: "He was walking along the sidewalk with Mr. West, and I was in Mr. Epler's store. He came in there, and wanted to know if I would talk to him. I told him, yes, I would talk to him. He called me in the back store, and says: 'Let's go back there so nobody will hear us.' He says to me: 'Mrs. West, can't we settle this some way?' He says: 'I'm willing to settle in any way you folks say.' He says: 'I'll settle it any way on God Almighty's earth that you folks say.' I says: 'I don't know what we will do with you.' He then said if we would settle it he would see that the child, or girl never would want for anything while he lived, and I told him that—I told him that I didn't know. I started away, walked away. He says to me: 'Just wait a minute; I want to talk one word more.' He was crying. He says: 'If you folks send me up to the pen, my character would be ruined for life.' I says: 'What about the girl's character?' He says: 'I will see that the girl's character will never be hurt.' I started to walk away again and he called me back the third time to talk to me; said he just wanted to say another word; said if we would settle he would settle any way we said. I turned and walked off and left him standing there crying." She further testified that a child was born to the prosecutrix on July 10, 1905. The prosecutrix also testified that she had a conversation with the accused on the 8th day of May, 1905, while she was in the cellar at their house skimming

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milk; that he asked her if she was going to have him arrested, and she told him that she did not know; that he then asked her if she would marry him. On cross-examination she testified that she was crying when the accused was talking to her in the cellar; that he inquired if he was the father of the child and she told him he was, that she knew he was the father of her unborn child because she had had no intercourse with any other person.

The accused testified in his own behalf, and denied positively that he ever had sexual intercourse with the prosecutrix; denied that he was ever in her room at any time when she was there; denied that he ever told her step-father to take the money home to the girl, that she needed it worse than he did. He admitted that he had a conversation with Mrs. McRoberts in Epler's store in Wayne, but denied that he ever made the statements testified to by her. He gave the conversation as follows: "Well, I just walked in there, and asked what she accused me of that trouble for. She said: 'I had ruined the girl for life.' I told her I had not. That I was not to blame for anything of the kind. I did not tell her that I would marry or support the girl." The foregoing is the substance of all of the evidence introduced on the trial.

The rule is well established that to sustain a conviction of the crime of rape the evidence of the prosecutrix must be corroborated; but this does not mean that there must be other evidence as to the main fact of sexual intercourse. It is sufficient if corroborating facts and circumstances be shown which tend to substantiate the truth of her statement. The charge called statutory rape is one easy to make, difficult to prove, and more difficult to be defended against. It is one which naturally creates a prejudice against a person alleged to have committed it, and it is the duty of the courts to carefully scrutinize the evidence in such cases; and where, as in this case, the story of the prosecutrix lacks the element of probability, and few, if any, corroborating circumstances are shown, to refuse to sustain a conviction. It appears from the record that the

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prosecutrix was away from home, and in the village of Randolph, for about two months next before the 28th day of October, 1904. It also appears that her child was born on the 10th day of July, 1905. There is no evidence in the record showing or tending to show that its birth was premature, and when we consider the usual period of gestation (about 280 days), with the fact that the child was born about 50 days short of that time, it would seem that the pregnancy of the prosecutrix and the birth of her child, should be given but little weight as a circumstance corroborating her testimony of the principal fact. It is contended by the state, however, that the alleged statements of the accused, testified to by the step-father and the mother of the prosecutrix, amount to a sufficient corroboration of her testimony to sustain the judgment of the trial court. The corroboration in this case, to say the most of it, is extremely slight. If the evidence of Edna McRoberts is to be believed, then the act of sexual intercourse between the prosecutrix and the accused, as testified to by her, could not have taken place. It appears that the accused at all times denied that he ever had sexual intercourse with the prosecutrix, and never directly admitted his guilt in any of the conversations with the mother and step-father of the prosecutrix; that on the trial he gave his own version of the conversations had with those witnesses, which differed materially from the statements made by them. So it would seem from a careful consideration of the evidence that it was insufficient to establish the guilt of the accused beyond a reasonable doubt. Indeed, it appears that the jury were in doubt of his guilt, for by their verdict they recommended him to the mercy of the court, and so, without hesitation, we have reached the conclusion that the evidence does not sustain the verdict. Having thus disposed of the case, it is neither necessary nor proper for us to consider any of the other errors assigned by the accused.

For the foregoing reason, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

## WILLIAM L. HICKS v. UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,209.

1. **Carriers: Passengers.** One who has not presented himself at the passenger station of a railway company or other place provided for the reception of passengers, and who has done nothing to indicate to the company's agents or employees that he intends becoming a passenger, and has in no way committed himself to the care or control of the company or placed himself in its custody, has not established the reciprocal relation of carrier and passenger, and cannot be regarded as a passenger being transported and under protection of the statute of the state.
2. **Directing Verdict.** Upon an examination of the evidence, held, that the court erred in withdrawing the questions of negligence and of contributory negligence from the jury and peremptorily directing a verdict.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*H. M. Sullivan and Warrington & Stewart*, for plaintiff in error.

*John N. Baldwin, Edson Rich and John A. Sheean*, contra.

AMES, C.

This is a proceeding in error to review a judgment for the defendant in an action to recover damages for a personal injury.

Hicks, who lived some distance from Gothenburg, in this state, went to that village one morning, in company with three other persons, with the intent to travel thence upon one of the defendant's railway trains to the village of Lexington, situate some distance to the eastward. Having arrived at the former town, the four persons stopped for breakfast at a restaurant lying to the northward of the railway line and passenger station of the defendant company. Before the meal was through with, it was an-

nounced by some bystander that the train upon which the party desired to take passage had arrived and was about to leave. This train was standing on a side-track southward from the passenger station, the building being between it and the plaintiff, and between the train and the building was the main line or track of the company. When the announcement was made, the party left the restaurant hurriedly and ran toward the station. Practically simultaneously, a through train not scheduled to stop at the village approached at a rapid, but it does not appear at an unusual, rate of speed from the west and swept over the track between the station and the train upon the siding. The country in that neighborhood is a flat or level prairie, and from any point at or within 300 feet north of the station the train on its approach could have been seen for a distance of several miles, but the plaintiff did not take the precaution to look in that direction, because, it seems, he did not apprehend the likelihood of the approach of a train from that direction at that time. The train on the side-track had arrived some five minutes before, and was emitting considerable noise, due to the "blowing off" or cleaning of the flues of the engine with blasts of steam, and his attention was not arrested by the sounding of the whistle and ringing of the bell of the incoming train, or by any other means, until he had run past the east end of the station and had crossed the main track, when his attention was attracted either by the hallooing of bystanders or by the noise of the incoming train, he is uncertain which, or perhaps by both, and he looked around and discovered the latter at a distance of about 400 feet. The incoming train was several minutes behind time, and in the usual course should have passed the station before the arrival of the standing train, but it does not appear that the plaintiff relied upon or was misled by that fact or that he knew of it. But the evidence shows that, at the time the plaintiff ran past the station and went upon the track, the conductor and a brakeman were standing on the north side of the main track waving their

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hands and hallooing so as to warn people of the approach of the train and the danger attendant thereon. Immediately upon his discovery of the situation, the plaintiff became aware of immediate peril and became confused and morally irresponsible. Whether he attempted to retrace his steps across the main track, or to retreat further toward the standing train, or whether he practically stood still, he does not remember and perhaps never distinctly knew. At all events he was beside the track when the moving train swept past and was struck by some of its projecting parts, receiving injuries to recover damages for which this action was brought. His companions boarded the standing train unhurt.

The principal argument by counsel is of the question whether the plaintiff was a passenger being transported within the meaning of the statute, so as to impose upon the company the liability of an insurer of his safety. At the close of the plaintiff's evidence the court instructed the jury to return a verdict for the defendant, seemingly upon the ground of contributory negligence, but perhaps for the reason that in his opinion there was insufficient evidence of negligence by the defendant. We are unable to adopt the idea that the plaintiff was a passenger. He had not presented himself in the defendant's station, or upon its platform or other place provided for the reception of passengers. He had said or done nothing that indicated in any certain or unequivocal way to the company's agents or employees or even to the bystanders, except his three companions, that he intended becoming a passenger, nor in any way committed himself to the care or control of the defendant or placed himself in its custody, so that the reciprocal relation of carrier and passenger cannot with propriety be said to have been established. That some such act must be done, and some such relation entered into, in order to render one a passenger being transported, within the meaning of our statute and under its protection, is the central idea expressed by this court, after a review of the authorities, in *Fremont, E. & M. V. R. Co. v. Hagblad*, 72

Neb. 773, and ought now to be regarded as the settled law of this state.

Neither do we think, in view of the evidence disclosed by this record, that, as a matter of law, the defendant company was guilty of actionable negligence. The train that stood upon the siding was one that in railroad parlance is called a "local": that is, one that stopped at all the stations and did not run with great rapidity when in motion. The other is what is called a "fast mail," which stopped at only the more important stations at long intervals of time and space, and which maintained, and presumably was under contract with the United States government to maintain, a great rate of speed. That such trains unavoidably "lose time," or are behind their schedule occasionally, is a matter of common knowledge, as is also the fact that it is necessary for them, in order to fulfill their mission, to overtake and pass slower moving trains, and to meet and pass other trains standing upon sidings, and that such sidings are, and practically can be, maintained, at least in sparsely settled districts, only at local or way stations. That such a situation is one of considerable peril is without doubt, but that the danger may be less than in like circumstances in more densely inhabited places is also obvious. That the company by its servants took some pains to warn the public of the dangers of the occasion is not disputed. Whether such means were such as ordinarily careful and prudent men would have regarded as commensurate with the peril or required by the circumstances is, we think, a question to be answered by the jury.

And so with respect to the conduct of the plaintiff. He was a man of mature years and a resident of the vicinage. He must be assumed, we think, to have had such general knowledge of the manner of operating the defendant's trains, and trains upon other railroads in like places, as was derivable from casual observation and readily obtainable by the public at large. But whatever may be the case in cities and densely settled communities the act of "run-

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ning for a train" and of boarding one standing still upon a siding at a way station, without entering the building, is one which, in comparatively sparsely inhabited localities, is practiced daily by ordinarily careful and prudent men, and one which, in itself, is not regarded by such men as negligent or especially dangerous. But such an act may under special circumstances and perhaps under such as occurred in this instance, be done so heedlessly and recklessly as justly to expose the person committing it to the charge of negligence. Whether in this or any similar instance it does so is a question addressed to the judgment of ordinarily careful and prudent men after a consideration of all the circumstances, and one which therefore should, in our opinion, be answered by the jury. Every case depends largely upon its own peculiar features and surroundings, and although "the books are full" of decisions, and a great many are cited by counsel on both sides, it is seldom that two are exactly alike even in essential particulars, or that one can be found that can be regarded as a controlling precedent or authority for a subsequent case. This fact is, of course, due to the difficulty or impossibility of formulating rules of law which are capable of accurate application to diverse transactions, and hence the comparative rarity of cases in which a peremptory instruction to return a verdict for either party is permissible.

For these reasons, it is recommended that the judgment be reversed and a new trial granted.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and a new trial granted.

REVERSED.

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## HIRAM RICE V. STEPHEN V. PARROTT.\*

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,239.

1. Contract: STATUTE OF FRAUDS. An oral contract, upon sufficient consideration, to divide the profits of a purchase and sale of land is not affected by the statute of frauds and is valid and enforceable.
2. ———: REPUDIATION: ACTION. An express repudiation and denial of such a contract by the party having the title will give rise to a cause of action at law for damages.
3. Appeal: MOTION FOR NEW TRIAL. An appeal to this court without the execution of a supersedeas bond is not a waiver of a pending motion for a new trial in the district court, and it does not deprive the latter court of jurisdiction to grant the motion.

ERROR to the district court for Boone county: JAMES N. PAUL, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Charles Riley and H. C. Vail, for plaintiff in error.*

*J. A. Price, Reeder & Hobart, I. L. Albert and J. J. Sullivan, contra.*

AMES, C.

The facts established, as we think, by a clear preponderance of the evidence in this case are that in March, 1899, Rice and Parrott entered into an oral agreement to the effect that the former should purchase with his own funds, and take to himself a conveyance of a certain tract of land, and that in consideration of certain acts and services performed and to be performed by Parrott in the procuring of the purchase and in looking after and caring for the land, the net profits of the transaction, when the land should be sold, should be equally divided between the parties. It is not clear that any specific date upon which the sale should be made was agreed upon although there is some conflict in the evidence in that regard, but the point

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 505, *post.*

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is in this case immaterial because the law, in the absence of stipulation, implied a reasonable time. The purchase and conveyance were made for a consideration of \$4,000 paid by Rice. Parrott, having, after the lapse of some time, made an ineffectual demand upon Rice for a sale of the land, procured a purchaser for it himself at an agreed price of \$7,400 cash, and prepared a deed to the intended purchaser, which Rice refused to execute, and he also repudiated and denied any interest in the transaction on the behalf of Parrott, who is not shown to have been in any respect in default in the keeping of his part of the agreement. In October, 1901, two and a half years after the purchase of the land, Parrott begun this action apparently for a specific performance and for an accounting. The original petition is not in the record. A trial to the court resulted, on May 1, 1903, in a judgment of dismissal without prejudice to a new action at law. Within three days Parrott filed a motion for a new trial which the court took under advisement and decided at a subsequent term, on November 17, 1903, by granting the application. In the meantime, and just before the expiration of the six months' period of limitation, Parrott filed and docketed an appeal in this court, but without the execution of a supersedeas, and immediately after the granting of his motion for a new trial he voluntarily dismissed his appeal. He, thereupon, by leave of court, filed an amended petition, also praying an accounting and specific performance. Issues were made up, and as the result of a trial to the court, without a jury, the plaintiff recovered a money judgment for \$2,100 and costs of suit, which the defendant seeks to reverse by this proceeding in error.

It has been argued at considerable length, both orally and by brief, that by docketing his appeal in this court the plaintiff below waived his then pending motion for a new trial, and that his subsequent dismissal of the appeal operated as an affirmance of the judgment of the district court dismissing the action, and deprived the latter mentioned court of jurisdiction. This contention is predicated

upon two grounds: First, upon the doctrine of the election of remedies, and it is said that the plaintiff, having elected to review the former judgment by appeal and actually begun proceedings to that end, could not afterwards abandon them and proceed at law by urging the motion for a new trial. But this is putting the cart before the horse. If the doctrine of the election of remedies were applicable, the plaintiff by filing his motion for a new trial elected to proceed at law, and waived his remedy in equity by appeal, which latter not only had he a right to abandon, but this court, upon the matter being brought to its attention, would have deprived him of by dismissal. But such has never been regarded as the law in this state, and, ever since the organization of its courts, parties have universally enjoyed the liberty of completing their records by obtaining rulings upon motions for new trial in equity causes, and afterwards appealing, and subsequently, if they chose, of abandoning the appeal and proceeding by petition in error.

The second ground is that the appeal vacated the judgment of the district court and deprived it of jurisdiction over the cause by transferring the entire controversy to this court. Although in some respects and for some purposes an appeal has such an effect, it cannot be said to have it unqualifiedly in all cases and in all regards, for, otherwise, the mere docketing of an appeal would operate as a supersedeas and dispense with the necessity for the undertaking prescribed by the statute upon the subject. That statute must itself be regarded as an express legislative enactment that the judgment shall, in the absence of the undertaking, retain its vitality and be capable of execution during the pendency of the appeal, and this court has held that even after supersedeas has been effected it may, for sufficient cause, be set aside and the judgment of the lower court restored to its original *status* and enforceability. *Tulley v. Keller*, 42 Neb. 788. As we have pointed out no supersedeas was given in this case, and the judgment for costs remained enforceable against the

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plaintiff until it was vacated by the order granting the motion for a new trial, and a like condition could have existed, of course, if the judgment had been in favor of the plaintiff and the situation of the parties had been reversed. It follows, we think, as a necessary consequence, that the district court retained its jurisdiction over the judgment, and of process and procedure founded upon it, and if its power to vacate it, in all respects as it would have done if no appeal had been taken, except that it could not interfere or impair the procedure in this court so long as the judgment remained in existence.

We are therefore concerned only with the sufficiency of the pleadings and evidence to sustain the judgment of the district court about which we have no doubt. It is urged, with some earnestness, that in the absence of a writing no estate or interest in the land was created and that an action for a specific performance of the agreement to make sale of it will not lie. But this question need not now be decided. It has been held by this court that an oral contract, upon sufficient consideration, to divide the profits of a purchase and sale of land is not affected by the statute of frauds, and is valid and enforceable. *Harris v. Roberts*, 12 Neb. 631; *Cameron v. Nelson*, 57 Neb. 381; and such seems to be the current authority elsewhere. *Holmes v. McCray*, 51 Ind., 358; *Richards v. Grinnell*, 63 Ia. 44; *Coward v. Clanton*, 79 Cal. 23, 21 Pac. 359; *Meagher v. Reed*, 14 Colo. 335, 24 Pac. 681. *Harris v. Roberts*, *supra*, was, in essential features, not unlike this, the action being at law for damages for breach of an oral contract to convey. Whether in that case or in this a specific performance of the agreement could have been decreed has not been decided and need not be. In neither case could the party who held the title, after having repudiated his agreement and refused to convey, retain both the land and the consideration for which, in part, he obtained it. If he retains the former no statute excuses him from his obligation to return the latter, with such sum in addition thereto or

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substitution therefor, by way of profits, as he promised to make. This conclusion is in harmony with *Norton v. Brink*, 75 Neb. 566. It was there decided that after such a contract has been executed by a sale of the land the statute of frauds is not a bar to an action to compel its performance by a division of the proceeds. It follows, of necessity, that the statute is not a bar to an action at law for damages for a breach of the contract by refusal to make a sale. That Rice was guilty of a breach of his contract cannot be successfully disputed. The action, though in form for specific performance, proceeded as one at law and resulted in a judgment for money only. There was no objection to the jurisdiction of the court in equity, and no demand for a jury to try the issue of damages, and it is not claimed that the amount of the recovery is excessive.

We are of opinion that no reversible error has been committed, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed April 4, 1907. *Judgment of affirmance adhered to:*

**Contract: STATUTE OF FRAUDS.** An oral agreement whereby one of the parties thereto is to look up and negotiate the purchase of such land as can be bought and sold at a profit, to take charge of, rent, improve and procure purchasers therefor, the titles to be taken in the name of the other party, who agrees to furnish the amount of money necessary to carry on the business, the net profits of the venture to be equally divided, is not within the statute of frauds.

BARNES, J.

The plaintiff below had judgment, and defendant prosecuted error. By our former decision the judgment of

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the district court was affirmed. A motion for a rehearing was sustained, and all of the questions presented by the record have been reargued to the court. For a full statement of the facts underlying this controversy reference may be had to our former opinion, *ante*, p. 501. The first trial in the district court resulted in a judgment dismissing the plaintiff's action without prejudice. A motion for a new trial was filed in due season, but no ruling was had thereon until more than six months after the judgment was rendered; and plaintiff, as a matter of precaution, lodged a transcript in this court and had his appeal docketed. The motion for a new trial was finally sustained, and thereupon plaintiff was allowed to dismiss his appeal.

It is again strenuously contended by counsel for the defendant below that plaintiff waived his pending motion for a new trial by filing a transcript and docketing an appeal in this court; that his subsequent dismissal of the appeal operated as an affirmance of the judgment of the court dismissing his action and deprived that court of jurisdiction. On this question, by our former opinion, we ruled against the defendant. On a reexamination of the matter we are satisfied with that ruling. We find that in the recent case of *Henry v. Allen*, 147 N. Y. 346, it was held that the taking of an appeal and its pendency does not prevent the trial court from sustaining a motion for a new trial, and it was said in that case by the court of appeals:

"We have heretofore pointed out that upon an appeal to this court the record itself is not transmitted to us, but a transcript thereof, and the case for all general purposes still remains in the court of original jurisdiction. *People v. Board of Education*, 141 N. Y. 86. In the above case we said: 'In all matters pertaining to the appeal itself and to the proper hearing thereon this court has jurisdiction, and also in regard to all applications which by statute may be made to this court after the taking of the appeal, but as to all other applications the case is

regarded as still pending in the court of original jurisdiction, and such applications should be made to that court.' \* \* \* If the supreme court, in the exercise of its discretion, grants the motion for a new trial, the legal effect will be the vacating of the judgment from which the appeal has been taken to this court, and a motion to dismiss the appeal would then be proper."

So, both on principle and precedent, our former judgment on this point was right and we adhere to it.

The second contention, and the one most relied on for a reversal of the judgment of the trial court, is that section 3, ch. 32, Comp. St. 1905, commonly called the statute of frauds, is a bar to plaintiff's right of recovery herein. The facts stated in plaintiff's petition and found by the trial court are, briefly stated, as follows: On or about the 30th day of March, 1899, the plaintiff and defendant entered into an oral agreement by which the defendant was to furnish all the money necessary to conduct the business of speculating in real estate, was to take and hold in his own name the title to such land as should be purchased until the same could be sold at a fair and reasonable profit above the original investment, and he was then to convey the same to the purchasers. It was agreed that the plaintiff, being a dealer in real estate, should look for and procure such lands as in his judgment could be bought and sold again at a profit, should cause the title thereto to be conveyed to the defendant, should seek for and procure purchasers for such lands, and should sell the same when a profit could be realized upon the original investment. He was also to have the general oversight, care and management of such real estate as might be bought and sold. He was to attend to renting the same, and to threshing, dividing and marketing the crops grown thereon; and when he procured a purchaser at a fair and reasonable profit the defendant was to convey the lands to such purchaser, and the proceeds of the sales were to be divided as follows: The defendant to be paid the amount of his original investment; the remainder, together with

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the income from the land, was to be equally divided between the plaintiff and defendant, after deducting taxes and expenses. It appears that in pursuance of the agreement the plaintiff purchased two tracts of land; one known as the Stangland farm, and the other as the Copson land, and had them conveyed by good and sufficient title to the defendant; that he thereupon took charge of the property, rented it, improved the Copson farm by hauling about 100 loads of manure thereon; that he looked after the division of the crops, and finally, a short time before this action was commenced, procured purchasers therefor at fair and reasonable prices, at a good profit over the original investment, and demanded that the defendant should convey said real estate to such purchasers. The defendant refused to comply with this request, and refused to pay the plaintiff his share of the profits which could have been realized upon such proposed sales.

It appears that contracts of this kind have been quite uniformly upheld by the courts of this country. In *Carr v. Leavitt*, 54 Mich. 540, the facts were similar to those in the case at bar. There the defendant, desiring to purchase certain lots in the city of Detroit, procured the services of the plaintiff in bringing about such purchase, and it was agreed that the plaintiff should employ his time and services in and about the purchase of said property at a price fixed between the plaintiff and defendant, and in and about the management of said property; that the defendant would furnish the means necessary to make the purchase, and upon the sale and disposition of the property so purchased the defendant would pay the plaintiff one-half the profits realized upon the sale over and above the price paid therefor. The plaintiff performed the services, and purchased the property for \$37,000, which was the price agreed upon. The property was conveyed to the defendant, and later on was sold for \$52,000, and the defendant, on demand, refused to account to or pay the plaintiff one-half of the profits realized on the sale. It was admitted that the alleged contract was not in writing, and

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the defendant took the objection that the contract was void under the statute of frauds. The trial judge held the objection well taken, and directed a verdict for the defendant. The case was appealed to the supreme court and upon the foregoing facts Cooley, Chief Justice, speaking for the court, said:

"If the contract the plaintiff relied upon was within the statute, it must have been because it contemplated a purchase and then a sale of certain lands. But the plaintiff was to be neither purchaser nor seller, and the contract did not contemplate that in any contingency an interest in the land was to be conveyed to or vested in him. It contemplated only that in a certain event the plaintiff should receive a share of the moneys that a sale of the land should bring. His interest was therefore in these moneys, and not in the land itself. And the moneys were to be payable to him in consideration of services performed. The profits on the two trades, to be brought about by the plaintiff, were to be taken as the measure of compensation, instead of any other that might have been agreed upon. This surely was not a contract 'for the sale of any lands or any interest in lands,' within the meaning of the statute of frauds. How. St., sec. 6181. That statute contemplates a transaction between parties contracting with each other as principals; and this was not such a transaction. In this case plaintiff as agent undertook to perform for the defendant certain services, and the defendant undertook to make a compensation therefor, the amount of which should be contingent on the value of the services. It was assumed in *Bunnel v. Taintor's Adm'r*, 4 Conn. 568, that such a contract was not within the statute, and there are many express adjudications to the same effect."

We approve of the rule announced in that case, and the reasoning of the learned chief justice supporting it. As before stated, nearly all of the courts of this country have upheld contracts like the one here in question. Some of them on the ground that the contract is one of partnership for the purpose of speculating in real estate; others holding

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that the contract is one for profit-sharing only; and still others, on the ground of compensation for services, as set forth in the opinion just quoted from. *Richards v. Grinnell*, 63 Ia. 44; *Brosnan v. McKee*, 63 Mich. 454; *Snyder v. Wolford*, 33 Minn. 175.

It is further contended that an affirmance of the judgment of the trial court commits us to a rule inconsistent with our last opinion in *Norton v. Brink*, 75 Neb. 575. It seems clear, however, that such is not the case, for the two cases are easily distinguishable. In *Norton v. Brink*, to avoid the statute of frauds, it was alleged that by the contract the land in question was to be purchased in partnership, and held for joint profit by the plaintiff and defendant. Nothing was said as to when it should be sold, if at all. It appears that Brink purchased the land himself, paid the full consideration therefor, took the title in his own name, and died without having sold it. His son, who inherited his estate, sold the land at a profit, and suit was brought against him to declare a resulting trust and for an accounting as to the proceeds of the sale. It was there held that the facts did not create the relation of partnership, and as the plaintiff had contributed nothing to the enterprise, and had paid no part of the purchase price, no resulting trust arose in her favor.

In the case at bar the plaintiff makes no claim to an interest in the land; neither does he allege the existence of a partnership. His claim is based on his right to recover one-half of the net profits of the transaction as his compensation for his services contributed to the joint enterprise. His evidence not only sustains this claim, but the defendant has in two letters written by himself to the plaintiff acknowledged the existence of such claim; and those letters were properly received in evidence against him. In one of them he says: "Yes, Parrott, I always keep my word. You are to have one-half the profits in the above farm when sold, and the same in the Copson farm. Of course, this is after the expenses are deducted, provided the income on

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them does not meet expenses." In the other letter, among other things, he said: "We must get all we can out of the place until a good price is given for it." This is a case where the establishing of the debt does not involve the establishing of an interest in the land itself. And, when the action concerns only the purchase money for the execution of the conveyances, of course the promise does not seek to create a trust, and is enforceable. *Harris v. Roberts*, 12 Neb. 631; *Cameron v. Nelson*, 57 Neb. 381; *Linscott v. Mc-Intire*, 15 Me. 201; *Hess v. Fox*, 10 Wend. (N. Y.) 436; *Snyder v. Wolford, supra*; *Smith v. Putnam*, 107 Wis. 155.

For the foregoing reasons, we are satisfied that our former conclusion on this point was right. As the foregoing are the only questions presented for our consideration on the rehearing, our former judgment is adhered to.

AFFIRMED.

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**AMERICAN BONDING COMPANY V. FRED HEYE ET AL.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,249.

**Supersedeas Bonds: LIABILITY OF SURETY.** In the absence of fraud or mistake, or of some circumstances working an estoppel, a surety upon a supersedeas bond can be held only for consequences of the proceeding in which the instrument was given.

**ERROR to the district court for Otoe county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. Reversed with directions.**

*Hall & Stout and E. Wakeley, for plaintiff in error.*

*John C. Watson, contra.*

**AMES, C.**

The defendants in error, Heye and others, successfully prosecuted in the district court for Otoe county an action against P. R. E. E. Linton and A. P. Linton to quiet title and possession in the former, of a tract of land lying in that county. For the purpose of obtaining a review of that judgment by this court, the Lintons, as principals, and the

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American Bonding Company of Baltimore, as surety, executed and filed with the clerk of the district court a bond in the penal sum of \$100, reciting the judgment, in substance, and concluding with the following as its condition. "That the judge of the court fixed the amount of the supersedeas bond at \$100; that the above obligation is given in pursuance of said order, and upon all the conditions provided by law for such bonds required to be given upon appeal; the said American Bonding Company of Baltimore hereby obligated itself to pay any portion of the above obligation fixed by the court, which may be required of it, for any violation of the provisions of said bond or the provisions of the law required in such bond hereby incorporated by reference." Shortly after the giving of the foregoing bond the Lintons prosecuted a petition in error in this court, which resulted in an affirmance of the judgment of the Otoe county court, and thereupon they sued out a writ of error from the supreme court of the United States, and for the purpose of effecting a supersedeas they, as principals, and the bonding company, as surety, executed and filed with the clerk of this court a bond in the penal sum of \$500, reciting, in effect, that it was given as a supersedeas of a judgment rendered by the circuit court of the United States for the district of Nebraska, pending the prosecution of a writ of error to reverse such judgment from the supreme court of the United States. Afterwards such proceedings were had in the last named court that the judgment of this court was affirmed. This action was begun in the county court of Otoe county by the obligees named in said bonds against the surety alone to recover the amount of costs taxed against the plaintiffs in error, the Lintons, in this court and in the supreme court of the United States. There was a judgment for the plaintiff in the county court, which was affirmed in a proceeding in error in the district court, and from the judgment of affirmance the present proceeding is prosecuted.

The petition recites the facts substantially as above related, and does not aver that at any time before the be-

ginning of this suit the bonding company knew or had notice, actual or constructive, that the instrument first described was used, or was intended or contemplated to be used, as a means of superseding the judgment in Otoe county pending a proceeding in error in this court, or that the instrument secondly described was used, or intended or contemplated to be used, as a means of superseding any judgment of this court under any circumstances. It can scarcely be necessary to cite authorities or to adduce reasons for holding that such a petition does not contain facts constituting a cause of action. The latter mentioned instrument appears to be entirely foreign to the litigation in which it was attempted to be used, and the most that can be said of the former one, even if so much can be said, which is doubtful, is that it was intended to be used in the prosecution of an appeal to this court, and it is quite evident that one might be willing to be surety in an appeal in which there would be a trial of the cause *de novo* and upon its merits, who would decline absolutely to be sponsor for a prosecution confined to allegations of errors committed by the lower court in the progress of the trial. It is plain that, in the absence of fraud or mistake or of some circumstances working an estoppel, a surety upon a supersedeas bond can be held only for consequences of the proceeding in which the instrument purports to have been given.

It is therefore recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to that court to reverse the judgment of the county court and proceed according to law.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to that court to reverse the judgment of the county court and proceed according to law.

REVERSED.

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Hageman v. Estate of Powell.

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**JOHN B. HAGEMAN V. ESTATE OF ENOS S. POWELL.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,280.

**Witnesses:** Competency. One who has a direct legal interest as one of several joint heirs or colegatees in an action against a representative of a deceased person is not rendered by the statute incompetent to testify as to transactions and conversations between the deceased and an adverse party in whose alleged right, claim or demand the witness has no interest.

**ERROR to the district court for Gage county: ALBERT H. BABCOCK, JUDGE. Reversed.**

*R. W. Sabin*, for plaintiff in error.

*Sackett & Spafford, contra.*

**AMES, C.**

Enos S. Powell died leaving several heirs at law, who are also joint residuary legatees under his will, and among whom was Mrs. Hageman, wife of the plaintiff, who is plaintiff in error herein. For several years immediately preceding his death he had been a member of the household of the plaintiff, who filed in the county court a claim for the reasonable value of his board and lodging. From an order of the county court thereon there was an appeal to the district court, where a petition, alleging the claim, was put in issue by answer and the cause prosecuted to trial. Upon the trial the plaintiff made offers of proof, by his wife as a witness, both of which were objected to and both of which the court excluded: First, that she overheard a conversation between the deceased and her husband with reference to the former making his home with the latter and paying therefor; and, second, that shortly before the death of her father she had a conversation with him in which he admitted having promised to pay her husband for the services, to recover for which the claim is prosecuted. There was a judgment for the defense, from which the plaintiff prosecutes error.

The only questions involved are as to the propriety of the rulings of the court upon the foregoing offers of testimony. Section 329 of the code enacts that "no person having a direct legal interest in the result of any civil action or proceeding, when the adverse party is the representative of a deceased person, shall be permitted to testify to any transaction or conversation had between the deceased person and the witness." Mrs. Hageman has a direct legal interest in the result of the suit, because, if her husband succeeds, a satisfaction of his claim will diminish her distributive share of her father's estate. But is she a party, or interested, adverse to the legal representative of the deceased in such sense that her testimony is excluded by the statute? A somewhat similar question was before this court and answered in the negative in *Parker v. Wells*, 68 Neb. 647. The decision in that case professedly followed and was founded upon the opinion in *Wylie v. Charlton*, 43 Neb. 840, from which a lone excerpt was quoted. After an extended discussion the latter mentioned opinion concludes, upon that branch of the case, with the following as a summing up of the results of reasons and authorities upon the subject:

"Having in view the common law as to competency, and the mischief which this statute sought to prevent, it should be construed as if it read that no person having a direct legal interest in the result of an action shall be permitted to testify, when the party interested adversely to the witness' interest is the representative of a deceased person."

It is clear that the statute so read would not exclude the testimony offered on the trial of this case. But intermediate between the two cases cited is the opinion of this court by former Chief Justice NORVAL in *Kroh v. Heins*, 48 Neb. 691, which is claimed to be inconsistent with them. But the writer thereof cannot be supposed to have been forgetful of *Wylie v. Charlton, supra*, which he cites with approval, and without an attempt to distinguish or discriminate between it and the decision which

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he himself was announcing. So that it does not appear that he regarded the two opinions as being in mutual conflict, nor were they necessarily so. In *Kroh v. Heins*, Mrs. Heins, who was one of several plaintiffs in the lower court and whose testimony it was held should have been excluded, was, or alleged herself to be, the sole trustee and owner of the legal title of the choses in action which were the subject of the suit and concerning the ownership of which she testified respecting transactions and conversations had between herself and the deceased, of whom she and the other plaintiffs were joint heirs, which testimony tended to support her own legal title as trustee and the beneficial ownership of the defendants who were her own children. The court held that, although she might waive her incompetency so far as it affected herself alone, she could not waive it on behalf of her coplaintiffs, and that, though she had legal interests on both sides of the controversy, the court would not weigh them for the purpose of attempting to ascertain the preponderancy, citing to this point *Wylie v. Charlton, supra*. We conclude from the foregoing considerations that the construction of the statute announced in *Wylie v. Charlton, supra*, ought now to be regarded as the settled law in this state, and since Mrs. Hageman has no interest in this controversy adverse to that of her coheirs and legatees of the estate of her deceased father, she is not incompetent to give the testimony offered on the trial.

For these reasons, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and a new trial granted.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and a new trial granted.

REVERSED.

## DAVID OTTO ET AL. V. GEORGE CONROY ET AL.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,300.

**Highways: Vacating: Discretion of County Board.** The decision of the necessity or expediency of establishing, maintaining or vacating a public road is committed exclusively to county boards and other like legislative and governmental agencies, and is not subject to judicial review.

ERROR to the district court for Buffalo county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Hamer & Hamer*, for plaintiffs in error.

*H. M. Sinclair*, contra.

AMES, C.

A certain public road in Buffalo county intersected a section line at two points, and between those two places traversed two adjoining quarter sections of land. A sufficient number of freeholders, having the qualifications required by the statute, presented to the county board a petition praying for a vacation of the road between these two points of intersection, and the connection of such points by the opening and working of a statutory road along the section line. A large number of residents of the county, none of them living or owning property between the places of intersection, or along the line either of the statutory road or of that portion of the old road proposed to be vacated, filed a remonstrance against the action prayed in the petition, the gist or substance of which is the following: "This road has been traveled by the public for 29 years and is one of the main-traveled roads leading into the village of Shelton, and is now a good road for hauling heavy loads over. Realizing that the change as contemplated by your honorable body will require a great expense if the new road is put in good condition to travel, and that such contemplated change will work a great hardship upon

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the farmers who are now compelled to travel it, and that many of them will be compelled to go elsewhere to trade, thus working a great injury to the business interests of the village of Shelton, we desire to protest against the proposed changing of said road as contemplated by your honorable body and petition that said road be left as it now is." The county board rejected the remonstrance and granted the petition, as did also the district court to which the matter was carried by proceedings in error, and from the judgment of affirmance in the district court error is prosecuted here.

There was a considerable volume of evidence taken before the county board and preserved in a bill of exceptions, from a clear preponderance of which, as counsel for remonstrants contend, it is made to appear that the action of the county board was impolitic and unwise because the section line road is rough and hilly, requiring the expenditure of a large sum of public funds to render it passable, while the part of the road proposed to be vacated is comparatively level and smooth, so that travel thereon is more expeditious and heavier loads can be hauled over it than upon the former, even after it shall have received all practicable improvement. But we concur in the opinion of the learned judge of the district court, expressed in special findings and entered upon the record, that these are matters calling for the exercise of administrative rather than judicial discretion and are not the subject of review by the courts. The case before us illustrates the truth of this proposition so clearly as to amount to a demonstration and to obviate the necessity of extended argument or the citation of authority. No error of procedure is complained of or pointed out. If the district court had reversed the order sought to be reviewed it is not presumable that a different state of facts would have been made to appear upon a reexamination of the questions involved, so that the order of reversal would have had no practical force, unless it should have been accompanied by a mandate requiring the county

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board to rescind its order and enter in lieu thereof one upholding the remonstrance and denying the petition, at least with respect to the vacation of the old road. No petition was needed for the opening of the statutory or section line road. There must be a finding that the public good requires such action, but, with respect to the order by the county board with reference to the utilization thereof there is no procedure subject to judicial review or in the course of which any error could have been committed; there being involved no claim by property owners for damages. *Barry v. Deloughrey*, 47 Neb. 354. It is, indeed, represented in the remonstrance and argued by counsel that certain objectors who are residents and property owners in the village of Shelton, and elsewhere in the county at varying distances from the vicinity of the proposed change in the route of travel, will suffer considerable indirect pecuniary damages on account of the diminution of their trade and the depreciation of the value of their lands which, it is alleged, will be occasioned by such change and consequent impairment of the highway. But no claims for any such damages were presented to the county board, or if any were so presented the action of the board thereon is not complained of in this proceeding. It will be seen, therefore, that an order of reversal, for the reason urged by plaintiffs in error, will be nothing more nor less than the assumption by the court of the ordinary functions of the county board with respect to the general administration of the road law. It is quite clear that neither the statute nor the constitution intended to confer any such power or duty upon the courts. On the contrary it is quite certain, both upon principle and authority, that the decision of the necessity or expediency of establishing, maintaining or vacating a public road is committed exclusively to county boards and other like legislative and governmental agencies, and is not subject to judicial review. *Butte County v. Boydston*, 11 Pac. (Cal.) 781; *Sherman v. Buick*, 32 Cal. 242; *Vedder v. Marion County*, 28 Or. 77, 36 Pac. 461; *Commissioners*

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Andresen v. Jetter.

*Court v. Bowie*, 84 Ala. 461; *Tiedt v. Carstensen*, 61 Ia. 334; *Howard v. Board of Supervisors*, 54 Neb. 325.

It is therefore recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

EPPERSON, C., concurs.

OLDHAM, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

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**NELSE ANDRESEN V. BALTHAS JETTER ET AL.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,806.

1. Trial. It is not error for the court to omit to submit to the jury evidence in support of a cause of action not set forth in the pleadings or embraced within the issues.
2. Evidence examined, and held to justify a peremptory instruction to return a verdict for the defendants.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*E. W. Simeral*, for plaintiff in error.

*A. S. Ritchie*, contra.

AMES, C.

This is a joint action against Balthas Jetter, a saloon-keeper, and Theodore Jorgensen, his barkeeper, and two other persons who are sureties upon the liquor bond of the former to recover damages for an alleged assault by Jorgensen upon the plaintiff, none of the other defendants being present or cognizant of it. The evidence is very brief and without conflict. The plaintiff was in the saloon where he had been drinking to some degree of intoxication, it does

not appear how great, but evidently falling a great deal short of incapacitation either mental or physical. While there he fell into an altercation with the barkeeper in which he used language which he says provoked the assault complained of, but which he testifies he would have used if sober, in reply to certain alleged insulting remarks by Jorgensen, who does not appear to have been intoxicated. At the conclusion of the plaintiff's evidence the court directed a verdict for the defendants, and the plaintiff prosecutes error.

Upon this showing we do not see how it can be maintained that the damages alleged were, in the language of the statute, "sustained in consequence of the liquor traffic." For aught that appears to the contrary the same provocative words on both sides might have been used and have had the same effect at any time and any place when and where the parties should have met, and it is expressly shown that they were not due to intoxication. The judgment and verdict are, therefore, unquestionably correct as to all the defendants except Jorgensen and as to them should be affirmed.

The action is distinctly and unequivocally in contract, on the liquor bond. The charge is that the liquor dealer, by and through Jorgensen as his agent, sold and gave to the plaintiff intoxicating liquors, and that Jorgensen also drank such liquors, and "that, on account of the liquor so drank by Jorgensen and this plaintiff, he, the said Jorgensen, did make" the assault complained of. This is the sole cause of action set out, or attempted so to be, in the petition and, as we have seen, there was a total failure of proof in its support, but the plaintiff contends that, even such being the case, there was sufficient evidence of assault by Jorgensen to have supported a recovery against him in a common law action in tort, and that, although there was no ground of action against the other defendants, the evidence ought to have been submitted to the jury against him, or an instruction to return a verdict against him ought to have been given by the court. The brief of plaintiff in error con-

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tains neither argument nor citation in support of this contention and we are satisfied that none can be found. The course suggested would be to permit a recovery upon a cause of action not set forth in the pleadings or embraced within the issues, and which would, therefore, not have been disclosed by a complete record so as to operate as a bar to a new prosecution for the same cause.

For these reasons, it is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

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**WILLIAM F. HOCH v. HERMAN C. F. SCHLATTAN.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,330.

**Appeal: REVIEW.** The mere printing of an assignment of error in a brief without comment, and without statement attempting to show why or for what reason or in what respect the trial court erred, is not sufficient to require this court to discuss the errors complained of.

**ERROR to the district court for Douglas county:** HOWARD KENNEDY, JR., JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Meyers & Ten Eyck, for plaintiff in error.*

*L. D. Holmes, W. H. Holmes and Nelson C. Pratt,* contra.

**AMES, C.**

This is an action in forcible detainer begun in justice's court against a tenant alleged to have forfeited his lease by nonpayment of rent. There was a judgment for the

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plaintiff in the justice's court, and also upon appeal in the district court, and from the latter the defendant prosecutes error.

The cause was submitted here upon briefs without oral argument. There seems to have been some conflict of evidence with reference to the issue of default in payment of rent, which the jury decided in favor of the plaintiff, presumably upon proper instructions. The brief of plaintiff in error contains a list of ten assignments of error, of which the following are samples: "The court erred in refusing to give the first instruction asked by the defendant." "The court erred in giving paragraph two of the instructions, on his own motion." But why or for what reason or in what respect, in the opinion of counsel, the court erred in either or any instance the brief does not state, and in the absence of such a statement the error, if any, will not be considered although the assignment is printed in the brief. No error in the record has been brought to our attention, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

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AFFIRMED.

S. F. HARRIS v. CLARENCE S. PAINE ET AL.

FILED MAY 3, 1901. No. 14,303.

Petition examined, and held not obnoxious to a general demurrer.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*J. A. Brown*, for plaintiff in error.

*Wilson & Brown*, contra.

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**OLDHAM, C.**

This case was originally instituted before a justice of the peace, and taken by appeal to the district court for Lancaster county, where plaintiffs filed an amended petition alleging that, for a valuable consideration, defendant had made, executed and delivered to Jacob North & Company a contract in words and figures as follows: "Jacob North & Co., Publishers, History of Nebraska, J. Sterling Morton, Editor in Chief.—Lincoln, Neb., Nov. 9, 1901.—Messrs. Jacob North & Co.: You are hereby requested and authorized to prepare and reserve for me one copy of the History of Nebraska which I agree to take as soon as completed, and for which I agree to pay to you or to your order the sum of twenty-five dollars (\$25) on the following terms, viz: Fifteen dollars (\$15) on demand; the balance, ten dollars. (\$10), on delivery of work complete, this work to be bound in full leather, and to consist of two volumes of about 800 pages each. (Signed) S. F. Harris." It was further alleged that the \$15 mentioned in said contract had been due and owing since November 9, 1901, at which time the said contract was duly accepted by Jacob North & Company; that no part thereof had been paid; that the contract had been assigned to the plaintiffs by Jacob North & Company for a valuable consideration; that the plaintiffs had made demand on defendant for payment of the \$15 prior to the bringing of the suit. Plaintiffs prayed judgment for \$15 and interest. Defendant demurred to the amended petition, and the demurrer was overruled by the court. Defendant elected to stand on the demurrer, and judgment was rendered as prayed for in the petition. To reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

The only question involved is as to whether plaintiffs' petition is obnoxious to a general demurrer. The written instrument on which the action is based is an order for a copy of the "History of Nebraska." This order, when

signed by the defendant and accepted by Jacob North & Company, became a valid and binding contract between the parties. The petition alleges that the order was accepted by Jacob North & Company. It is true that it is not alleged in the petition that the work was prepared and reserved for defendant's use, and it is urged in defendant's brief that without such allegation the statement in the petition that the order was duly accepted is a mere conclusion of law and not an allegation of fact. While the petition is in no sense an accurate model of pleading, yet, as against a general demurrer, the allegation that the order was accepted is sufficient. If defendant desired to be informed as to what action Jacob North & Company had taken to indicate an acceptance of the order, she should have assailed the petition by motion, and not by demurrer. And again, if the consideration of the contract has absolutely failed by reason of the refusal or neglect of Jacob North & Company to prepare the work and reserve it for defendant, such fact should have been pleaded by answer. The petition shows the signing of the order by defendant and its acceptance by Jacob North & Company, and the terms of the contract alleged upon provided for the payment of \$15 on demand, when the order was accepted.

It is urged, further, that the very nature of the order shows on its face that it is not assignable, on the well-established proposition that executory contracts which stipulate solely for special personal service, skill or knowledge are not assignable. If the petition had shown that the work of editing the book was to be done by some other than the editor named in the contract, Honorable J. Sterling Morton, there would be much weight in this contention, but the mere mechanical work of printing and binding a book is not, at least on its face, of such personal character as to prevent the contract from being assigned. If there was any reason of a personal nature why defendant was induced to subscribe for this book on the assurance that it would be bound and printed by Jacob

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North & Company, and no one else, such fact should have been made to appear by answer.

It is urged that the court erred in permitting plaintiffs to amend their petition filed before the justice of the peace by inserting the allegation that a demand was made for the \$15 before suit was instituted. This objection cannot be raised by general demurrer to the amended petition, and, even if it were raised, it is without merit, as the amendment in nowise changed the cause of action alleged upon in the magistrate's court.

We therefore conclude that the petition on its face states a good cause of action, as against a general demurrer, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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**MARLIN C. YOUNG, APPELLEE, v. SARAH C. FIGG ET AL.,  
APPELLANTS.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,319.

**Execution Sale: NOTICE.** In a sale of real estate on execution under the provisions of section 497 of the code, notice of the sale must be published during thirty days before the date of the sale. *Miller v. Lefever*, 10 Neb. 77, followed and approved.

**APPEAL from the district court for Sarpy county:  
GEORGE A. DAY, JUDGE. Reversed with directions.**

*George A. Magney and E. S. Nickerson*, for appellants.

*A. E. Langdon, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This is an appeal from a confirmation of a sale in a mortgage foreclosure proceeding. The objection urged

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against the regularity of the sale was that notice of the sale was not published for thirty days before the day of the sale. It appears from the affidavit of the publisher that the first publication of the notice was made December 15, 1904, and the sale was had on January 14, 1905, or on the 30th day of the notice. Section 497 of the code provides: "Lands and tenements taken in execution shall not be sold until the officer causes public notice of the time and place of the sale to be given, for at least 30 days before the day of sale." This section also provides: "All sales made without such advertisement shall be set aside, on motion, by the court to which the execution is returnable." This section of the statute has been frequently construed by this court, beginning with the case of *Miller v. Lefever*, 10 Neb. 77, and in this and in each subsequent decision we have held that 30 days must intervene between the first publication of the notice and the day of the sale. In the case at bar only 29 days intervened; consequently the court erred in overruling defendant's motion to set aside the sale.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to sustain the motion to set aside the sale.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to sustain the motion to set aside the sale.

REVERSED.

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JACOB A. YOUNKIN V. WILLIAM R. ROCHEFORD ET AL.\*

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,822.

**Master and Servant: Torts of Coemployees.** The master is not liable for an injury inflicted upon one of his employees by the tortious act of another outside of the course of his employment, and this is true even though the coemployees are not fellow servants.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*John M. McFarland and Benjamin S. Baker*, for plaintiff in error.

*Crofoot & Scott, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an action by the plaintiff in the court below for the recovery of damages for personal injuries sustained while in defendants' employ. There was a trial of the issues to the court and jury, and at the close of all the testimony a verdict was directed for the defendants. From a judgment rendered on this verdict, plaintiff has appealed to this court.

The facts upon which plaintiff predicated his right of recovery are as follows: For several years preceding the injury complained of defendants had been engaged in making and burning brick in the city of Omaha. Plaintiff had been in the employ of defendants at various times for several years preceding his injury and had engaged in various classes of work in the yards, sometimes off-bearing the brick, and at other times placing the brick in the kilns, and attending the burning of the kilns. All of the work done on the yards was under the direction of the foreman, Mr. Zarp. One O'Mara was an engineer employed by defendants to run a stationary engine, used for the purpose

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 531, *post.*

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of grinding the clay and moulding it into bricks on a table, from which the off-bearers removed them to the drying sheds. The top of this table was oiled by O'Mara, that the bricks might be easily removed and retain their form as moulded. O'Mara had a bucket in which he mixed the oil for this purpose, as well as for oiling the engine. The kilns in which the brick were burned were a considerable distance from the stationary engine, the one on which the injury was received being about 100 feet away.

At the time of the injury, plaintiff was on the side near the top of a kiln of brick which he was burning. The night foreman had taken the oil can used by O'Mara from the stationary engine to another portion of the yards to use the oil in firing a kiln. When O'Mara came to his work he inquired for his oil can, and plaintiff told him where he had seen it. O'Mara went and got the bucket, which contained about three quarts of oil, and as he passed the mouth of the burning kiln on which plaintiff was at work he carelessly threw the oil into the mouth of the kiln. The flames rushed up the side and front of the kiln, burning plaintiff's face and arm, causing him to jump and receive severe injuries. That it was wanton negligence on the part of O'Mara to throw the oil into the mouth of the burning kiln when plaintiff was working on the side of the kiln very near by, and that this negligent act was the proximate cause of the injury complained of, is beyond dispute. If we should concede, for the sake of the conclusion, the proposition earnestly and ably contended for by plaintiff's counsel that O'Mara and plaintiff were not, at the time of the injury, fellow servants under the doctrine announced by this court in *Union P. R. Co. v. Erickson*, 41 Neb. 1; *Union P. R. Co. v. Doyle*, 50 Neb. 555; *Norfolk Beet Sugar Co. v. Koch*, 52 Neb. 197, and *Missouri P. R. Co. v. Lyons*, 54 Neb. 633, the question would still arise as to whether or not the undisputed facts in the record show a liability for which the master must respond. Under plaintiff's theory of the facts,

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O'Mara was not within the course of his employment by the master when he threw the oil from the bucket into the burning kiln. If he had been a kiln-burner and had done this act while firing the kiln, or if he had been firing his engine, then his act would have been in the course of his employment. While the evidence shows that he used the oil bucket in connection with his work around the stationary engine and on the moulding table, yet this was the only use he made of it within the line of his duties. If the master, through his vice-principal, the foreman, had ordered O'Mara to throw the oil into the kiln, although such work was outside of the course of O'Mara's employment, there would be no doubt of the liability of the master; but no such order or direction was given by the foreman. Consequently, we cannot see how the act causing the injury can be regarded as anything except the wanton negligence of O'Mara outside of the course of his employment. The rule is that a master is not liable for an independent tort committed by his servant. The only exception to this rule occurs where a contractual relation exists between the injured party and the master that imposes on the latter a very high degree of care in protecting against injury; such as the obligation which a common carrier owes to passengers, or the duty an inn-keeper owes to his guests. In each of these latter cases, the master may be compelled to respond for injuries inflicted wantonly by servants outside of the course of their employment and in direct violation of the positive commands of the master. But there was no such contractual relation existing between defendants and plaintiff. Consequently, defendants are not liable for the independent tort committed by O'Mara.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES, C., concurs.

EPPERSON, C., dissents.

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By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed January 5, 1907. *Judgment of affirmance adhered to:*

1. **Master and Servant: TORTS OF SERVANTS.** A master is not responsible for the tortious or wrongful acts of his servant, when such acts are not directly authorized by him, nor done in the course or within the scope of the servant's employment.
2. Former opinion, *ante*, p. 528, adhered to.

**BARNES, J.**

The facts in this case will be found correctly stated in our former opinion herein, *ante*, p. 528. A motion for a rehearing was sustained, and the case has been reargued to the court. It appears that the district court directed the jury to return a verdict for the defendants, and this is the principal error complained of. By our former opinion the judgment of the district court was affirmed. It is now strenuously urged by counsel for the appellant, first, that the plaintiff and O'Mara, the person whose act caused the injury in question, were not fellow-servants; second, that the act in question was performed by O'Mara within the scope of his employment, or, in other words, while acting in the line of his duty to the common master, who is therefore liable for its consequences.

From the facts disclosed by the record it seems clear to us that the question of the defendants' liability does not depend on the relation which the plaintiff and O'Mara sustained to each other at the time the injury was inflicted, and we are not required to determine whether or not they were fellow servants. Indeed, so far as this decision is concerned, it may be conceded that no such consociation existed between them as would create that relation. We are thus brought face to face with the question: Was the act complained of committed under such circumstances as

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to require the master to respond in damages therefor under the rule of *respondeat superior?* On the trial plaintiff testified, in substance, that he was working for the defendants at the time the injury occurred, and had been employed by them for about nine years before that time; that O'Mara was also working for them, and had been in their employ for many years; that the business in which defendants were engaged was manufacturing brick; that it was O'Mara's duty to run defendants' stationary engine, which furnished the power for that purpose, and this was the only duty performed by him; that all of the men employed in the defendants' brick-yard were under the charge of and controlled by a foreman of the name of Zarp; that plaintiff was a burner, and was engaged in that work when he received his injuries; that on the morning of the 19th of September, 1903, while he was standing on the side of the defendants' brick-kiln, near the top, his feet resting on a four-inch projection on the casing, his position being just above the second arch, and while engaged in repairing the casing to the kiln, he heard O'Mara making inquiry for the bucket, meaning a galvanized bucket used about the yard and in what was called the oil house for the purpose of mixing the oils and carrying kerosene or coal oil to the kiln with which to start the fires; that Zarp and the others said they did not know where it was; that having seen the bucket just before the injury occurred he told O'Mara that it was around on the side of the kiln near the post, or words to that effect; that O'Mara took up the bucket, which contained about three quarts of coal oil, stepped to the second arch and threw the oil on the fire. The fire was burning brightly at the time, and the result of O'Mara's act was a kind of an explosion. The flames from the burning oil ran up the kiln, both inside and outside of the casing, and burned him very severely. (Then followed a description of his injuries, together with a statement of the damages he claims to have sustained thereby.) Later on, in answer to questions propounded by his counsel, plaintiff also testified as follows: "Q. Was he in the

employ of the defendants? A. Yes, sir. Q. O'Mara? A. Yes, sir. Q. The engine which he was operating, of which he was the engineer, is it a stationary engine? A. Yes, sir, stationary engine. Q. What did that engine do, what part of the work? A. It ran the machinery that made the brick. Q. That made the brick? A. Yes, sir. Q. Can you tell what purpose the oils you say were mixed in this bucket were used for? A. Yes, sir. It was used on the roller to oil the tables. Q. And the tables were used for what purpose? A. For making or manufacturing of brick. Q. Bricks are pressed down on that table? A. Yes, sir. Pressed in it. Q. Pressed in that table? A. Yes, sir. Q. Your employment was with the burning of the kiln, only? A. Yes, sir. Q. What work did Mr. O'Mara perform other than that of firing or operating the engine? A. None. Q. What work had O'Mara to do, if anything, with the burning of the kiln? A. Nothing whatever to do. He had nothing whatever to do with the burning of the brick. Q. What work, if any, did you and Mr. O'Mara do in common with each other? A. None."

There is no evidence in the record to show, or by which it can be inferred, that it was any part of O'Mara's duty to use the oil bucket in question in any manner whatever, and plaintiff's own evidence seems to conclusively establish the fact that when O'Mara went to the kiln, obtained the bucket and threw the oil contained in it onto the fire he was not performing any duty which he owed to the defendants by reason of his employment.

It is a general rule of law that a principal or master is civilly responsible for wrongs committed by his agent or servant, while attending to his business, through inattention, negligence or want of skill. It is perhaps the only branch of the doctrine of negligence upon which all the cases unite, and as to which there is no dispute. It is a rule so plain and easy of application that it cannot be made clearer by illustration. This rule, however, implies that the master will not in any case be liable for wrongs committed by the servant, while not acting about the

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master's business; or what is substantially the same thing, not acting within the scope of his authority or in the line of his duty. This rule is so reasonable that the grounds on which it rests need scarcely be suggested. In all the affairs of life, men are constantly obliged to act for or by others; but no one could venture to so act if the mere circumstance that he employed another to act for him about any general or particular business made him an insurer against all wrongs which such person might possibly commit during the period of such employment. 2 Thompson, Negligence, sec. 2,333; *Wright v. Wilcox*, 19 Wend. (N. Y.) 343; *Douglass v. Stephens*, 18 Mo. 362; *Hudson v. Missouri K. & T. R. Co.*, 16 Kan. 470; *Yates v. Squires*, 19 Ia. 26; *Porter v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 41 Ia. 358; *Little Miami R. Co. v. Wetmore*, 19 Ohio St. 110. In *Hudson v. Missouri, K. & T. R. Co.*, *supra*, Mr. Justice Brewer speaking for the court, said:

"A master is ordinarily liable to answer in a civil suit, for the tortious or wrongful acts of his servants, if those acts are done in the course of his employment in his master's service." \* \* \* "This negligence must be in the course, or, as it is sometime called, "scope" or "range" of the latter's employment." \* \* \* "The true rule is, that the master is only responsible so long as the servant can be said to be doing the act, in the doing of which he is guilty of negligence, *in the course of his employment as servant.*" In applying these rules to the facts of that case it was further said in the opinion: "The gist of the complaint is very fairly and forcibly stated by the learned counsel for the plaintiff in error, when they say, 'the plaintiff at the time he received the injury complained of was rightfully in defendant's depot inquiring about and demanding the freight of his principals of and from the said agent of the defendant; and while there, in the prosecution of his duties with the said defendant, and in their depot, he received from the said agent, not the freight of his principals, but the iron poker of the defendant, causing the injury complained of.' In other words, Trotter

was employed to deliver freight; plaintiff came and demanded freight; Trotter replies to his demand with an assault. Was such assault in the course of Trotter's employment? Did it grow out of any services he was engaged in, or was it in the line of his duty? It seems to us it was clearly disconnected therefrom, and a mere volunteer assault. True, the employment may have given the opportunity and occasion, but it was not an act which in any fair sense the company could have been said to have employed him to do, or to have anticipated that he would do, nor an act which was the act of the company. \* \* \*

A party goes into a store to purchase goods, and is therefore rightfully there. He makes an inquiry as to the price of an article of a clerk behind the counter, who in reply takes a weight and knocks him down with it. Can this be said to be an act which the proprietor contemplated, when he employed the clerk? That it was in the line of the clerk's employment, and that therefore the employer was responsible? But the cases are parallel. The employment in each furnishes the opportunity and the occasion; but in each the act is not one the agent was employed to perform, nor within the scope of his employment."

So, in the case at bar, the act of O'Mara in throwing the oil upon the fire cannot be said, in view of the evidence, to have been committed in the line of his employment. If it be insisted that we should presume that O'Mara was performing a duty he owed to the master, and was acting within the line of his employment when he went to the kiln, procured the bucket, and threw the oil on the fire, the answer is, the plaintiff by his own testimony has rendered it impossible to indulge in such a presumption. He states positively that the only duty O'Mara was to perform, and did perform, for the common master was that of firing and running the stationary engine; that he performed no other duties whatsoever; that he had nothing whatever to do with the burning of the brick, and it is not shown that his employment required him to use or empty the oil bucket for any purpose whatever. As was well said in our former

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opinion, the act causing the injury cannot be regarded as anything but the wanton negligence of O'Mara, outside of the course of his employment. Therefore, in view of the general rule that the master is not liable for an independent tort committed by his servant, and because the plaintiff's evidence does not bring this case within any exception to the rule, it seems clear that the defendants are not liable for the consequences of the act which is the foundation of his complaint.

For the foregoing reasons, our former opinion affirming the judgment of the district court is adhered to.

AFFIRMED.

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#### BROWN COUNTY V. JOHN LAMPERT.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,327.

**Counties: Prisoners: Maintenance.** Where a prisoner is convicted in the first instance of a felony, and the judgment of conviction is suspended by the supreme court and he is remanded to the custody of the sheriff of the county in which the offense is alleged to have been committed, and the judgment of conviction is reversed by this court, and at a new trial the defendant is acquitted, the county in which the offense is alleged to have been committed, and not the state of Nebraska, must pay the cost of keeping and maintaining such prisoner between the time of his first conviction and the time of his final acquittal.

**ERROR to the district court for Brown county: WILLIAM H. WESTOVER, JUDGE.** *Affirmed.*

*William M. Ely*, for plaintiff in error.

*P. D. McAndrew*, contra.

**OLDHAM, C.**

John Lampert, defendant in error in this suit, is sheriff and *ex officio* jailer of Brown county, Nebraska. As sheriff of said county he filed his claim with the county board for

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the statutory fees for keeping Fred M. Hans as a prisoner in the county jail in said county from the 7th day of January, 1904, to the 19th day of August of the same year. The claim was disallowed by the county board, and an appeal was taken to the district court for Brown county, where the action of the county board was reversed and the claim allowed. To reverse this judgment the county brings error to this court.

There is no dispute that the fees claimed are the proper statutory allowance for the keeping of the prisoner, but the county's contention is that on the 24th day of October, 1903, the prisoner Hans was sentenced by the district court for Brown county to imprisonment for life in the state penitentiary, and that from the time of his conviction and sentence until the time of his subsequent acquittal the cost of his confinement should be paid by the state, and not the county. Section 378 of the criminal code is as follows: "The cost of keeping and maintaining any prisoner after his conviction of any offense punishable by imprisonment in the penitentiary, wheresoever he may be kept and confined, shall be paid by the state, according to the rate which may be established by law at the time when such services may be rendered or expenses incurred; *Provided*, The rate so established shall not be construed to apply to any contract which the governor may make for the confinement of convicts in the penitentiary of a state."

The contention of the county is that under this section of the criminal code the state, and not the county, should pay the sheriff's claim. There is no doubt that if the conviction of Hans had been affirmed by the supreme court this contention would be well founded; but the record shows that after the conviction of Hans the judgment of conviction was suspended by order of the chief justice of this court until a hearing could be had on a petition in error; that the order of suspension recited: "It is further ordered that the said Fred M. Hans be committed to the custody of Brown county to be imprisoned in the county jail of said county until the case in error is disposed of."

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It also appears from the record that at the hearing of the error proceeding in this court the judgment of the district court was reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings (*Hans v. State*, 72 Neb. 288), and that at a new trial had in the district court at the April term thereof, 1905, Hans was acquitted of the offense charged against him. Now section 380 of the criminal code provides: "The costs of keeping and maintaining any prisoner previous to his conviction of an offense punishable by imprisonment in the penitentiary, or either before or after his conviction of an offense not so punishable, or when he shall not be convicted of any offense, shall be paid by the county in which the offense may be committed, or alleged to have been committed." While it is true that at the first trial in the district court Hans was convicted of a felony, yet by the judgment of this court such conviction was set aside and held for naught, and the case was remanded for a new trial under the opinion of this court. At the new trial Hans was acquitted, so that the charge for the cost of keeping and maintaining him while a prisoner was the cost of keeping a prisoner who was not convicted; and under section 380, *supra*, that cost should be paid by the county.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

**AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.**

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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JAMES S. MORRISON, APPELLANT, v. JOSHUA E. GOSNELL  
ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED MAY 8, 1906. No. 14,226.

1. **Appeal.** "The time within which an appeal may be taken from a decree of the district court does not begin to run until such decree has been entered of record, so that it is within the power of the appellant to comply with the statute regulating appeals by filing in this court a certified transcript of the proceedings of the district court." *Bickel v. Dutcher*, 35 Neb. 761.
2. **Statute of Frauds: QUIETING TITLE.** Part performance on the part of a vendor, including the surrender of possession, and full performance on the part of the vendee, is sufficient to remove a parol agreement for the sale of real estate from the operation of the statute of frauds, and the vendee in possession may maintain an action to quiet title.

APPEAL from the district court for Harlan county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*Flansburg & Williams*, for appellant.

*J. G. Thompson and T. L. Porter*, contra.

EPPERSON, C.

This action was instituted in the district court for Harlan county by the plaintiff, a real estate broker. The facts alleged in the petition are substantially as follows: The plaintiff was employed by the defendants, Drew and Woodward, to sell their land, consisting of 420 acres. In the event of a sale through the plaintiff's agency, the said defendants, by parol, agreed to convey to plaintiff a ten-acre tract of land as his commission. The plaintiff procured a purchaser for the land, and said defendants and the purchaser entered into a written contract for the sale and purchase thereof. At the time such contract was made the said defendants fully recognized, and it was understood and agreed at that time, that the plaintiff had

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earned his commission for making said sale and was then entitled to a deed to said ten-acre tract; that the plaintiff would then take possession of said land as owner, and that as soon as the purchaser paid the balance of the purchase money on his contract the said Drew and Woodward would convey the said ten-acre tract to the plaintiff in full satisfaction of his commission. At the suggestion of Drew and Woodward, plaintiff took possession of the said ten-acre tract and has ever since retained possession thereof. Said defendants afterwards refused to convey the remainder of the land to the purchaser procured by plaintiff, but conveyed all their land, including the ten-acre tract, to the defendant, Gosnell, who knew of the possession and rights of plaintiff. Plaintiff prayed for a judgment clearing the title to the ten-acre tract of land of the cloud occasioned by the deed from Drew and Woodward to Gosnell, and a mortgage given by Gosnell to the said Drew and Woodward. He further asked for a decree quieting title in plaintiff. To this petition the defendants filed a general demurrer which was sustained by the trial court, and a judgment of dismissal was entered. From this judgment the plaintiff appeals to this court.

1. Counsel for defendants in his oral argument objected to the jurisdiction of this court for the reason that this case was not filed until after the expiration of six months from the announcement of the judgment by the trial court. A supplemental certificate filed by the clerk of the district court for Harlan county, appearing in the records, discloses that the judgment was announced by the court below October 10, 1904, but that the journal entry of such judgment was filed in the office of the clerk October 18, 1904. The case was filed with the clerk of this court April 12, 1905, and within six months from the entry of the judgment of record in the court below. Under the rule announced in *Bickel v. Dutcher*, 35 Neb. 761, the six months prescribed by statute within which an appeal may be filed in this court begins at the time the judgment was entered of record in the lower court. This case was cited

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with approval in *Ward v. Urmson*, 40 Neb. 695, and *Norfolk State Bank v. Murphy*, 40 Neb. 735. We have therefore, by the filing of the transcript herein, obtained jurisdiction of this cause.

2. It will be observed that the action is not for the recovery of a commission for selling real estate; nor is it an action for the specific performance of a contract for sale; but it is to quiet the title to a tract of land which the plaintiff claims as owner under a contract with his grantors. The petition clearly alleged that the plaintiff was the owner of the land in controversy and in possession under a contract of purchase fully executed on his part and partially executed on the part of the defendants, Drew and Woodward, who parted with possession. In the case of *Hanlon v. Wilson*, 10 Neb. 138, a very similar state of facts existed as to the nature of a contract of sale. It was there held by this court that part performance by the vendor, including the delivery of possession, and full performance by the vendee, is sufficient to take a parol contract for the conveyance of real estate out of the statute of frauds. The petition herein stated a cause of action, and the demurrer should have been overruled and plaintiff permitted to prove his alleged case.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

**AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.**

**By the Court:** For the reasons appearing in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

**REVERSED.**

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**-EDMUND C. STRODE ET AL., APPELLEES, V. JOSEPH S. HOAGLAND ET AL., APPELLANTS.**

FILED MAY 8, 1906. No. 14,247.

**Judicial Sale: Setting Aside.** The district courts of this state are vested with discretion to set aside a judicial sale, if there has been fraud or unfairness on the part of any person prejudicial to the rights of a party to the suit.

**APPEAL** from the district court for Logan county:  
**HANSON M. GRIMES, JUDGE.** *Affirmed.*

*W. V. Hoagland*, for appellants.

*Wilcox & Halligan, J. E. Morrison and E. C. Strode*,  
*contra.*

**EPPERSON, C.**

This is an appeal from an order of the district court for Logan county setting aside a judicial sale in a proceeding foreclosing a real estate mortgage. The mortgage in controversy was given by Joseph S. Hoagland and wife, who have continuously owned the equity of redemption. On the day preceding the sale the defendants filed objections to the appraisement for the reasons that the action had abated, that the appraisers were not resident freeholders of the county, that the lands were appraised so far below their real value as to make said appraisement fraudulent, that a copy of the appraisement had not been filed in the office of the clerk of the court prior to the advertisement, and that the appraisement was not made upon actual view by the appraisers. At the sale the defendant's daughter-in-law was the sole bidder. She bid \$670, the land having been appraised at \$1,000. The executors of the estate of Martha E. Stuart, who had died since the suit was instituted, filed objections to the confirmation of the sale for many reasons; among them are the following:

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That before the sale the attorney for the defendant had filed with the clerk objections to the appraisement, which motion the executors confessed; that after the objections had been filed by the defendants their attorney bid on said property in the name of his wife, and that no greater bid was made for the reason that the objections were on file. The executors do not rely upon the other objections alleged in their motion, and it is unnecessary to refer to them here. Before the filing of these objections by the executors, the defendants had withdrawn their objections to the appraisement.

The only question to be considered is whether or not the conduct of the defendants and their daughter-in-law was unfair and prejudicial to the plaintiffs to such an extent as would justify the district court, exercising sound legal discretion in setting aside the sale. That the appellant and the defendants were acting in unison there can be no doubt. The defendants employed their son as attorney in the action. Acting for them he filed objections to the sale, thereby preparing for further litigation and delay. On the day of sale, as attorney for his wife, he bid upon the property; and afterwards as attorney for the defendants, withdrew the objections previously filed. His wife then was the successful bidder, and for a sum defendants had previously alleged was so far below the real value of the property as to amount to fraud. "It is ordinarily the duty of a court, where a judicial sale is made in conformity with its decree, to ratify such sale." *Passumpsic Savings Bank v. Maulick*, 60 Neb. 469. But when one party indulges in unfair or fraudulent conduct to the prejudice of an adverse party, the trial court is vested with a discretion to set aside the sale. In the case of *Roberts v. Robinson*, 49 Neb. 717, it was held: "If there has been fraud or unfairness, irregularity, or disregard of the statute in making a judicial sale, the district court is invested with the discretion to set such sale aside." The fraud or unfairness necessary to avoid a sale is not limited to the wrongs of the officers conducting the sale, but whenever any person

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does some act manifestly unfair and prejudicial, which would become effective upon confirmation of the sale, the court should intervene to prevent the consummation of the wrong.

The evidence in this case shows that one other person was disposed to bid at this sale, but having learned that objections were filed, and fearing protracted litigation, refrained from bidding. But even in the absence of evidence of this nature it is reasonable to presume that the filing of such objections will result in discouraging bidders, and a sale thus made may be set aside on the motion of the party aggrieved. The unfairness in this case is obvious. The defendants and those acting for and with them discredited the proceedings by filing objections to the appraisement, thereby threatening to litigate the rights of the purchaser. It is not even claimed that the objections were filed in good faith. The evidence of defendant's attorney as to his reasons for this conduct was that he filed their objections "with the object of raising all possible objections that might be raised in court before confirmation if facts should develop." It was his business to know the facts and not to object unless justified. Defendants depreciated the value of the land by their improper conduct, making it possible to purchase at the depreciation they caused, and their daughter-in-law cannot now claim to be a fair purchaser. Such conduct would vitiate a contract, and therefore fairly brings this case within the exception to the rule announced in *Nebraska L. & T. Co. v. Hamer*, 40 Neb. 281, which provided: "Until a bid is accepted it is a mere proposal and may be withdrawn by the bidder. After acceptance it becomes a binding contract and cannot be withdrawn or changed except under such circumstances as would justify the rescission or reformation of other contracts."

But appellant argues, in effect, that plaintiffs were not prejudiced because they might have appeared at the sale and protected their rights by bidding a greater amount. The plaintiff's were executors of the mortgagee's estate.

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They were justified in submitting to the defendants' motion to set aside the appraisement because of its extremely low and fraudulent valuation. They waived no rights by their failure to bid.

The record of the trial court shows no abuse of discretion, and we recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

LETTON, J., dissenting.

There is no competent evidence in the record to show that the appellees were damaged, or that the land was worth more than it was sold for, or that it would bring more upon a resale.

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**UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY v. EDWARD D.  
MURPHY.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,264.

1. **Pleadings: APPEAL: CAUSE OF ACTION.** There was a variance in the time of alleged damage by fire between the petition in the county court and the petition as amended in the district court, otherwise the petition in the district court was the same as the petition in the county court; pleadings examined with reference to the facts, and held to state the same cause of action.
2. **The measure of damages to growing trees, having no value for purposes of transplanting, is the value of the trees with reference to the land in the situation in which they stood prior to the damage, less their value for practical purposes afterwards.**
3. **Damages: EVIDENCE.** It is not error to permit a witness to testify whether or not such growing timber is valuable as ornamental or shade trees or as a protection to the owner's premises.
4. **Evidence examined, and held sufficient to support the verdict.**

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ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLEE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*John N. Baldwin, Edson Rich and John A. Sheean*, for plaintiff in error.

*Warrington & Stewart and H. M. Sinclair, contra.*

EPPERSON, C.

Murphy sued the defendant company in the county court of Dawson county, charging that on or about the 22d day of September, 1902, he suffered a loss by fire of 11 tons of hay, 155 growing trees and 35 fence posts of the aggregate value of \$226.20, and that said fire was caused through the carelessness of the defendant. In his petition filed in the district court for said county, to which the case was taken on appeal, the plaintiff fixed the time of said fire as in the county court "on or about September 22, 1902." Near the close of the trial, the court permitted plaintiff to amend his petition by stating that the fire occurred on or about the 21st day of October, 1902.

1. Defendant argues that by such amendment a different cause of action was alleged. This is seriously considered because there was in fact on each of the days in controversy a fire caused by defendant, which damaged plaintiff's property. Defendant contends that by the amendment plaintiff was permitted to substitute the damage done by the fire other than the one alleged in the county court. The evidence shows that the fire of September 22d destroyed the hay on the south side of the track, and the fire of October 21st destroyed the property alleged in the petition. The damages alleged were the same in the petition filed in the county court and the amended petition filed in the district court. There was only the one fire which damaged fence posts, trees and hay. The same cause of action was alleged. Plaintiff might have recovered damages done October 21, even though he had not amended his petition, but, having chosen to amend, did not thereby lessen his rights to recover.

2. As to the measure of damages, the court instructed the jury as follows: "The court instructs the jury that, if you find from the evidence and under the instructions of the court for the plaintiff, you will assess the amount of his recovery at the amount of damage the trees sustained by reason of the fire, and this sum is ascertained by determining the value of the trees burned as standing timber with reference to the land in the situation in which they stood, less their value in their burned and charred condition after the fire." Defendant takes exception only to the clause "with reference to the land in the situation in which they stood." Otherwise, the instruction is identical with that approved by the court in the case of *Fremont, E. & M. V. R. Co. v. Crum*, 30 Neb. 70. It was there held that the measure of damages was not the market price of trees for transplanting as shade or ornamental trees, but the difference in value of such trees before and after the fire as standing timber. We cannot see that the objectionable feature varied the approved rule. There was no evidence that the trees in controversy in this case were intended for any other purpose which would permit their separation from the land, or that they were of value for the purpose of transplanting. By inserting the matter objected to in this instruction, the trial court properly limited the jury to a consideration of the one element of damage. It occurs to us that this was a matter favorable to defendant. The learned commissioner in *Kansas City & O. R. Co. v. Rogers*, 48 Neb. 653, in writing of a similar matter, used this language: "If the market value is not a proper test, and if their value must be determined as standing timber, then it follows that it is not only proper, but absolutely necessary to consider their value with reference to the land in the situation in which they stood." There was no error in the instruction complained of.

3. Upon the trial the plaintiff as a witness in his own behalf was asked this question: "State whether or not such trees as you have described were destroyed in this fire have a value as ornamental or shade trees and as a pro-

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tection to the buildings and premises generally?" Again counsel cite *Fremont, E. & M. V. R. Co. v. Crum*, *supra*. But we do not understand that this court undertook to say that the value of ornamental and shade trees was not to be considered by a jury in ascertaining the amount of damages. But as to the trees in controversy in that case the question of the value thereof for transplanting was not to be considered. In the case at bar the question of transplanting was not considered, but the value of the trees as standing timber was to be ascertained, and the elements constituting that value were proper subjects of inquiry. The court properly overruled defendant's objection to the question.

4. Defendant requested the court to instruct the jury to return a verdict for the defendant, on the ground that there was no evidence to support plaintiff's claim that the defendant was negligent in setting out the fire on the 21st of October. The evidence clearly shows that the fire which destroyed the plaintiff's property described in the petition was on or about October 21, 1902; that the defendant's right of way abutting the plaintiff's damaged grove and hay lands was not kept clean and free from dry and combustible material; and that the fire began on the right of way soon after the passage of one of defendant's locomotives. This evidence, under the rule of this court, was sufficient to establish the plaintiff's case. *Union P. R. Co. v. Keller*, 36 Neb. 189; *Rogers v. Kansas City & O. R. Co.*, 52 Neb. 86. The evidence as to the amount of damages was conflicting, but the amount of the verdict was within the limits fixed by the several witnesses, and we see nothing in the record supporting defendant's contention that the verdict was the result of passion and prejudice on the part of the jury.

Finding no reversible error in the record, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

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Union P. R. Co. v. Meyer.

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY v. PETER C. MEYER.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,265.

1. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the verdict.
2. Refusal to Instruct: REVIEW. This court is not bound to review the action of the trial court in refusing to instruct the jury as requested, when no exception is taken to such refusal.
3. Action: PARTIES. A bailee of property having an interest therein under express contract may maintain an action to recover the value thereof against one through whose negligence or failure of duty it is lost.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*John N. Baldwin, Edson Rich and John A. Sheean, for plaintiff in error.*

*Warrington & Stewart and H. M. Sinclair, contra.*

**EPPERSON, C.**

The plaintiff recovered judgment in the district court for Dawson county for the killing of ten head of cattle. Plaintiff was the owner of part and bailee of part of the cattle in controversy, and also of other cattle, which were, on the morning of the accident, confined in a pasture adjoining the railroad right of way. On July 11, 1903, an unusual wind, rain and hail-storm drove the cattle through the fence onto the defendant's right of way. Plaintiff alleges that the employees of defendant negligently ran one of its trains upon the cattle, killing seven head owned by plaintiff and three head in his custody as bailee. Plaintiff had judgment, and the defendant prosecutes error to this court.

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1. The first point for determination is whether the evidence is sufficient to sustain the verdict. The proof discloses that the east-bound train of the defendant, which killed the cattle, was running 45 or 50 miles an hour; that the track was straight for at least two miles west of the place of the killing, and that on a clear day the engineer could have seen the cattle in time to have stopped the train and prevented the damage. There was a conflict in the evidence as to the condition of the weather at the time of the accident. Witnesses called by plaintiff testified that the storm was of short duration; that immediately after, and while defendant's train was four miles west of the place of the accident, the rain and hail had ceased, the sun came out and the day was clear. Defendant's witnesses testified that it was yet raining at the time of the accident, and that the rain, striking the engine, produced steam, which clouded the lookout window of the engine cab, whereby the engineer in charge of the train was unable to discover the cattle upon the track until within 200 feet thereof. If the plaintiff's evidence was true, the defendant's employees were negligent as alleged in the petition, unless other duties demanded their attention at that particular time. Defendant contends that such was the case; that by reason of other duties the defendant's engineer could not sooner have discovered the cattle on the track. The evidence shows that he was employed with no particular duty at that time other than clearing the front window of his cab that he might better observe the track in front of him. This question was submitted to the jury by an instruction of the court upon its own motion. The matters complained of clearly show an issue of fact, the determination of which was for the jury.

Defendant further contends that the plaintiff was guilty of contributory negligence in that he failed to use diligence in protecting his property. The cattle divided into two herds upon defendant's right of way. Immediately following the storm, plaintiff started from his home, hastened to defendant's right of way, and drove therefrom the herd of

cattle nearer the gateway, which had been blown down apparently by the storm. He then hastened toward the other herd, which was about three-quarters of a mile west of the gateway. Before he had gone far, the train reached them and the damage was done. Defendant claims that plaintiff should have brought to his assistance a stranger and his family who were at plaintiff's house, where they had been driven by the storm. The proof fails to disclose that it was within the power of the plaintiff to procure the services of this family, or that with their assistance time was sufficient to permit a rescue; nor is it shown that plaintiff could have reached the more distant herd on the track, had he attempted so to do in the first instance. There was no evidence of contributory negligence.

2. Error is predicated upon the refusal of the trial court to instruct the jury as requested by defendant. An examination of the record discloses that no exceptions were taken to the refusal of the court to give defendant's requested instructions. Hence, under the rule often announced by this court, we cannot review the action of the district court in refusing to instruct the jury at defendant's request. *Holloway v. Schooley*, 27 Neb. 553.

3. One of the instructions refused pertained to the recovery of damages by plaintiff as bailee of the three head of cattle killed, and, as that would affect the question as to the sufficiency of the evidence to entirely support the verdict, we are required to consider the proposition, though not the alleged error as to the instruction. Plaintiff was in possession under a contract with the owner whereby he was entitled to one-half of the offspring of the cattle bailed. This question has not, to our knowledge, been decided by this court; but we believe, while that question has been considered in other courts, it has, without exception, been held that a bailee of property having an interest therein under an express contract may maintain an action for the negligent destruction of the property bailed. In *Chamberlain v. West*, 37 Minn. 54, 33 N. W. 114, it is said: "Nothing is better settled than that, in actions for torts

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in the taking or conversion of personal property against a stranger to the title, a bailee, mortgagee, or other special property man is entitled to recover full value, and must account to the general owner for the surplus recovered beyond the value of his own interest; but as against the general owner or one in privity with him he can only recover the value of his special property." See also *Jellett v. St. Paul, M. & M. R. Co.*, 30 Minn. 265; *Russell v. Butterfield*, 21 Wend. (N. Y.) 300; *Mechanics & Traders Bank v. Farmers & Mechanics Nat. Bank*, 60 N. Y. 40; *Atkins v. Moore*, 82 Ill. 240; *Fallon v. Manning*, 35 Mo. 271.

Finding no reversible error in the record, we recommend that the judgment of the trial court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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ISABEL LINN, APPELLANT, v. CITY OF OMAHA ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED MAY 8, 1906. No. 14,616.

1. **Municipal Bonds: SPECIAL ELECTIONS.** Under its charter the city council of Omaha may provide by ordinance a manner, not inconsistent with statutory provisions, for calling and conducting a special election for the purpose of voting upon a proposition to issue such bonds of the city as are authorized by law.
2. ———: **PUBLIC BUILDINGS.** The power to issue bonds for the construction or purchase of needful buildings for the use of the city, conferred by section 195 of the Omaha charter, gives that city power to issue its bonds for the purpose of raising funds with which to procure a site for any such building, the construction of which is also provided for in the same manner and as a part of the same proposition.
3. **Special Election: ENGINE HOUSES.** At a special election there was submitted to the electors this question: "Shall the bonds of the

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city in the sum of \$60,000 be issued for the purpose of paying the cost of constructing fire-engine houses \* \* \* such \* \* \* to be in the locality and at the estimated and approximate cost as follows: North 50 feet of lot 13, block 1, Armstrong's First Addition, estimated cost \$30,000. For the purchase of site and the erection of a fire-engine house thereon in the district lying north of Willis avenue \* \* \* estimated cost \$30,000." Held, To contain but one proposition—to procure engine houses.

4. ——: VOTING MACHINES. An inscription on the ballot label of a voting machine used in elections upon questions may be abbreviated to meet the requirements of the limited space. The inscription, "Shall the city issue \$60,000 fire-engine house bonds to run 20 years at 4%?" upon the ballot label of the voting machines used at the election in controversy, as an abbreviation of the proposition quoted in the last paragraph, is a sufficient statement of the question submitted.
5. A city election will not be annulled by the courts because the city council delegated to persons not members thereof the ministerial duty of assisting the city clerk in tabulating the election returns, in the absence of fraud or mistake.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
**ALEXANDER C. TROUP, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*A. G. Ellick, for appellant.*

*John P. Breen and W. H. Herdman, contra.*

EPPERSON, C.

This is an action for injunction instituted by the plaintiff, who is a resident and taxpayer of the city of Omaha, to annul ordinance No. 5,613 of said city providing for a special bond election, and to declare void an election held in pursuance thereto, and to restrain the defendants as officers of the city of Omaha from executing or negotiating certain bonds of that city. A demurrer was filed to the petition and sustained by the trial court. Plaintiff, not desiring to plead further, a judgment of dismissal was entered, from which the plaintiff appealed.

The facts alleged in the petition, and necessary for our consideration, are as follows: On September 27, 1905, the

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city council of Omaha passed an ordinance providing for submitting to the electors of said city at a special election the following proposition: "Shall the bonds of the city of Omaha in the sum of \$60,000 be issued for the purpose of paying the cost of constructing fire-engine houses for the use of the fire department of the city of Omaha, such fire-engine houses to be in the locality and at the estimated and approximate cost as follows: North 50 feet of lot 13, block 1, Armstrong's first addition, estimated cost \$30,000. For the purchase of a site and the erection of a fire-engine house thereon in the district lying north of Willis avenue, west of the east line of Sherman avenue and east of the west line of Twenty-fourth street, estimated cost \$30,000." Said ordinance authorized and directed the mayor to issue his proclamation calling said special city election, and directed that said proclamation be issued at least 20 days prior to said election, and provided that, if voting machines be used at said election, the city clerk should prepare the statement of the question submitted to be inserted on the ballot label. The mayor issued his proclamation, and the proposition for such election was published as required by law. On November 7, 1905, said special election was held, at which voting machines were used instead of ballots. Upon the ballot label there was set forth the following words and figures: "Shall the city issue \$60,000 fire-engine house bonds to run 20 years at 4%?" On the Thursday evening following, the city council met for the purpose of canvassing votes cast at the said election, and at the meeting the president appointed two persons to assist the city clerk in canvassing the returns. These two persons took an oath of office before the city clerk to faithfully and impartially perform their duties as canvassers, and thereupon they and the city clerk proceeded to canvass the vote. At the session of the city council on the following day, the clerk and the persons thus appointed to assist him made a report in writing to the city council that they had tabulated the vote, and found that upon said proposition there were 3,416 votes "Yes," and 1,468 "No." Upon receiving such

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report, the president of the city council declared the proposition voted upon, stating the same at length, duly carried. Upon motion, and the vote of the city council, the declaration of the president was approved. On November 21, 1905, the city council duly passed an ordinance authorizing and directing the issuance of said bonds. Thereafter the bonds were offered for sale by the city of Omaha, and were sold to J. L. Brandeis & Son, and at the time this suit was instituted the defendants were preparing to execute, issue and deliver said bonds to the purchaser.

1. The plaintiff contends that the city of Omaha under its present charter has no power to submit such a question to the electors at a special election. Subdivision 28, section 144 of the city charter (Comp. St. ch. 12a, 1905), authorizes and empowers the city to establish fire-engine houses. Subdivision 29 of said section provides that the city may establish any useful or necessary building upon any land purchased for such purpose. Section 195 of the charter provides as follows: "The mayor and council are hereby authorized and empowered to issue bonds of the city with interest coupons annexed in such amounts and for such length of time as they may deem proper \* \* \* for the construction or purchase of a city hall, auditorium, or other needful buildings for the use of the city." Section 197 provides: "No bonds \* \* \* shall be issued until the electors of said city shall have authorized the same by a two-thirds vote of the electors of such city, voting on said proposition, at a general or special election of said city held after ten days' notice, published in the official paper of the city stating the maximum amount proposed to be issued and stating distinctly the purpose for which they are to be issued." Reading the several sections above cited together, it clearly appears that the city has the authority to construct or purchase useful buildings, and under the petition in this case we are required to assume that the proposed engine houses are necessary and useful. It also appears that the city officers have the power to issue bonds to raise funds for such purpose. We find no provision in the

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charter providing the manner for calling the special elections authorized by section 197; but as the power was expressly conferred by the legislature, which failed to establish the manner of its exercise, the city was required to prescribe by ordinance the manner of exercising these powers. Such was done in this case by the passage of ordinance No. 5,613 set forth in the petition. Authority therefor is given by section 143 of the charter which provides: "When by this act the power is conferred upon the mayor and council to do and perform any act or thing, and the manner of exercising such power is not specially pointed out, the mayor and council may provide by ordinance the details necessary for the full exercise of such power."

2. Plaintiff contends, further, that the city of Omaha has no power to issue bonds for the purpose of purchasing a site for an engine house; and cites in support thereof *Witter v. Board of Supervisors*, 112 Ia. 380, 391, 83 N. W. 1,041, in which the supreme court of Iowa held that under the statute of that state, authorizing counties to borrow money for the erection of public buildings, and to issue bonds for such indebtedness, a county has no express or implied power to issue negotiable bonds for a debt created in the purchase of necessary real estate for a courthouse site. This case, it occurs to us, is not in point. In the opinion the court say in reference to the statutes they had under consideration:

"It is contended by the county, however, that express power so to do is conferred by sections 447 and 448 of the code, and that the power to issue bonds for the erection of a public building was also intended to include the ground upon which it is situated. A careful examination of the statute covering the entire subject leads us to a different conclusion."

A like examination of our own statutes leads us to the conclusion that a city of the metropolitan class in this state has the authority to issue bonds for the purchase of land as a site for an engine house. The statute construed

by the Iowa court, it seems, contained no provision for the purchase of the desired public building. Section 195 above quoted, it will be observed, confers upon the city officers power to issue bonds for the construction or purchase of a city hall or other needful buildings, and it seems to us that there can be no doubt but that under this provision the city would have authority to issue bonds for the purchase of an engine house, and that such purchase would include the lot or tract of land upon which the engine house had been constructed. As above shown, the city had authority to issue bonds for the construction of an engine house, and the question presents itself as to whether or not the provision of the charter is broad enough to include the purchase of the site for the proposed building. Evidently the legislature intended to provide for the procuring of all needful buildings by the issuance of bonds. We think that the intention was sufficiently expressed by the language used, and that the clause providing for the purchase of needful buildings is sufficient to authorize the purchase of a site therefor.

3. The plaintiff further contends that the question submitted at the special election contained more than one proposition, and therefore is in violation of section 194 of the charter which provides that each proposition must contain but one subject or purpose. It is argued that the construction of the engine house located at Twenty-fourth and Cuming streets is one subject; that the engine house to be located north of Willis avenue another; and that the proposed purchase of the tract of land was a third. If more than one proposition was in fact submitted the petition stated a cause of action, and the injunction should have been allowed. Many cases are cited by counsel wherein the courts of some of our sister states have disapproved similar propositions submitted in the alternative; such as: "Shall the following be adopted: To issue bonds of the city of Leavenworth in the sum of \$400,000 to purchase, procure, provide or contract for the construction of water-works?" *City of Leavenworth v. Wilson*, 69 Kan. 74.

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It was held that the proposition was dual and the election void. And to the same effect were the decisions in *Elyria Gas & Water Co. v. City of Elyria*, 57 Ohio St. 374, and *Farmers Loan & Trust Co. v. City of Sioux Falls*, 131 Fed. 890. In *Kemp v. Hazlehurst*, 80 Miss. 443, a proposition to provide "for the issuance of bonds for the erection of electric lights and water-works" was held not invalid because double in its nature. In *People v. Counts*, 89 Cal. 15, the court held that a proposition to vote bonds for the construction of two separate wagon roads was not dual. A vote of the necessary majority on the question to "purchase or construct" would leave the matter undetermined and with no choice indicated by the electors. But, under an affirmative vote on the proposition to buy a lot and construct thereon a building, the electors have definitely made a choice and conferred upon the city authorities a fixed duty, in the exercise of which they have no choice. The proposition in the case at bar was not dual, neither was it stated in the alternative. It was but a single proposition definitely fixed by the ordinance and by the mayor's proclamation. It is true that the proposition contemplated the construction of two engine houses and the purchase of a site for one, but such were but detailed statements of the general proposition—to procure engine houses.

4. It is next argued that the proposition submitted to the electors was not distinctly stated upon the ballot label of the voting machines. We were not favored with an oral argument of this case, but from plaintiff's brief it appears that the basis of this contention is that more than one proposition was in fact submitted, while only one appears in the inscription of the ballot label. But as above shown the proposition was single in its nature, and for the reasons above stated the city council had the authority to submit to the voters the proposition in its entirety. The ballot label necessarily contained an abbreviated statement of this proposition. Section 125 $\alpha$ , ch. 26, Comp. St. 1905, provides: "On the ballot label for questions, the

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statement of the questions submitted may be abbreviated to meet the requirements of the limited space, with the words 'Yes' and 'No' for the voter to indicate his affirmative or negative vote on any such question by operating the proper device therefor." The inscription on the ballot label was not intended to furnish information to the voter in detail as to the object of the election. The proclamation was notice of the election and fully informed the electors of the object of the election. The object of the inscription was to instruct the voter as to how he might intelligently vote on the question of which the proclamation gave him notice. For this purpose the inscription was sufficient and within the provisions of the law.

5. Plaintiff finally contends that the issuance of the bonds in controversy would be illegal because the city council delegated the power of canvassing the election returns to the city clerk and two assistants. The persons appointed made a report to the city council as to the number of votes cast for and against the proposition. It does not appear that they were called upon to exercise any quasi-judicial functions, or perform other than ministerial duties. It is, we believe, without an exception, the general rule that officers may delegate to competent persons, not officers, duties such as are clerical or ministerial in their nature, unless prohibited by statute. In this case the city clerk with the assistance of the persons delegated ascertained the result of the election from abstracts returned by the several election boards and reported the result, which was announced by the president of the council. No fraud is alleged; and such irregularity is not sufficient to avoid the election.

From these facts, fully disclosed in the plaintiff's petition, we are satisfied that said petition states no legal reason why the plaintiff is entitled to the restraining order and other relief prayed for, and we therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

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Brewster v. Meng.

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**BENJAMIN F. BREWSTER ET AL. V. JENS C. MENG.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,171.

1. **Second Appeal.** This court on a second appeal of the same case will not reexamine questions of law presented and determined on the first appeal unless the opinion first expressed is manifestly erroneous.
2. **Remand: AMENDMENT.** A party cannot try his case by piecemeal; and where a case has been tried and appealed to this court and remanded to the district court, with directions to enter a specified decree, the defendant will not be allowed to amend his answer by alleging facts which existed and of which he had knowledge prior to the trial first had.

**ERROR to the district court for Sioux county: WILLIAM H. WESTOVER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*Allen G. Fisher*, for plaintiffs in error.

*N. K. Griggs, contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

A former opinion in this case is reported in *Meng v. Coffee*, 67 Neb. 500. The case was remanded to the district court with the following directions: "To make new and further findings of fact in conformity with said opinion, and to enter a decree enjoining the defendant Wilcox from wasting or unreasonably diminishing the waters of Munroe creek, and enjoining the defendants Brewster and Coffee from consuming all the waters of Warbonnet and Hat creeks, respectively, in the irrigation of their lands, or permanently diverting in any year a greater proportion of the water in such streams for the time being

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than they were accustomed to take out prior to 1893, having regard to the nature of the season and the condition of the stream at the time; that proportion and other questions of fact necessary to the rendition of such a decree to be ascertained from the evidence already taken or by taking further evidence at the discretion of the district court." Upon the filing of the mandate in the district court the defendants Brewster and Coffee asked leave to file a supplemental answer, in which it was alleged that by a finding of the state board of irrigation made in 1889 the said defendants were awarded a prior right to the waters in controversy in this action. The court refused to allow the filing of such supplemental answer or to receive any additional evidence in the case, and thereupon entered a decree conforming to the directions contained in the mandate.

The two principal questions urged on this appeal are that the former opinion is erroneous, and that the court erred in refusing to allow the plaintiffs in error to tender additional issues and to introduce evidence in support thereof. We have again examined the opinion in *Meng v. Coffee*, *supra*, and are entirely satisfied that the opinion correctly reflects the law applicable to the facts disclosed by the record as it then stood. It would serve no useful purpose to review the former opinion, nor, indeed, do we think that we could add anything to what is there said in support of the views announced. The case was carefully considered. The conclusion announced was unanimously adopted by the court as then constituted, and should, we think, be adhered to. Relating to the action of the court in refusing to allow new issues to be made or to receive further evidence in the case, we are satisfied that no error was committed. The finding of the state board of irrigation was made in 1889 and long prior to the commencement of this action. Whatever rights the parties may have acquired from such finding existed when this case was first tried, and, if material to the interest of the parties, should have been presented at that time. A case cannot

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be tried by piecemeal. There must be an end to litigation. A party cannot be allowed to present a part only of his defense and when, after appeal, the case has been remanded for judgment, be allowed to make new issues, presenting other facts which he claims as a defense to the action, and which facts existed and were well known to him prior to the first trial. This is a rule so well known to the profession that it would be a waste of time to cite authorities in its support. Aside from this the finding of the state board of irrigation, which the plaintiffs in error now seek to introduce into the case, excludes from the water right granted them "the prior right of the owners of land bordering on this stream or through which this stream flows, to so much of the natural flow of the stream as is necessary for domestic use including stock water."

We cannot see that the finding of the state board of irrigation awards them any further or additional right than is given by the decree entered, and we recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

**ALBERT** and **JACKSON**, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**LOYAL MYSTIC LEGION OF AMERICA v. EMMA A.  
RICHARDSON.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. NO. 14,254.

**Beneficial Associations: MEMBERSHIP.** Where it appears from the constitution of a benefit society which insures the lives of its members that initiation and the payment of one advance assessment is indispensable to membership, the fact that the person's application has been accepted and his petition fee paid will not entitle his beneficiary to any insurance in the event of his death before he has been initiated and paid the one advance assessment required.

ERROR to the district court for Hall county: JAMES R. HANNA, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*Tibbets Bros. & Morey*, for plaintiff in error.

*W. H. Thompson, contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

Article 22 of the constitution of the supreme council of the Loyal Mystic Legion of America is in the following language: "Only the supreme council or the board of directors shall have power and authority to constitute, suspend or reconstitute the subordinate councils of this order, which shall be done either by an officer of the supreme council, or by a member of the order duly commissioned by the board of directors through the supreme worthy councilor. A member so commissioned or any elective officer of the supreme council shall have power to install officers and obligate applicants for membership. Provided, that, if at the proper time for installing officers there is not present a supreme officer or a deputy of the order, then any elective officer of the council who has been regularly installed may perform the duty." Section 3 of the by-laws of subordinate councils provides for the formation of a subordinate council as follows: "Any number of persons, not less than ten, who are eligible and who shall comply with the rules and regulations of the supreme council, with the approval of the board of directors or its duly authorized representatives, may upon being duly obligated become members of this fraternity and may be constituted a subordinate council. The members of all councils will be known and designated in the ritual of the order as companions."

In November, 1901, one John Collins, a duly authorized deputy of the Loyal Mystic Legion of America, solicited applications for membership in that order and to form a subordinate council at Fort Collins, Colorado. He solicited

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and received the application of Charles C. Richardson, and this application, with others, was forwarded to the supreme council at Hastings, Nebraska. The application was accepted, a certificate of membership issued by the supreme council and returned to Fort Collins. The beneficiary named in the certificate was Emma A. Richardson, mother of the applicant. November 20, 1901, was fixed on as the date to organize the subordinate council at Fort Collins, but for some reason no organization was perfected until December 30, 1901, at which time the applicants who had been passed by the supreme council, and who were present, were obligated and initiated by Collins, the deputy, the officers of the subordinate council elected, and the council duly organized. Collins at that time turned over to the worthy councilor the certificates of all applicants, and the worthy councilor and worthy secretary filled up and signed the blank certificate of membership printed on each of the certificates, Richardson's being in the following language: "Companion Charles C. Richardson became a member of Fort Collins Council No. 208 Loyal Mystic Legion of America of Fort Collins, state of Colorado, on the 30th day of December, 1901. Benjamin F. Evans, Worthy Councilor. Attest: Clyde H. Brown, Worthy Secretary." Prior to the meeting Richardson commenced work at a mill some 50 miles from Fort Collins, was not present at the meeting, was not initiated as a member and not obligated, unless, as claimed by defendant in error, the signing of his application which, we understand, contained the form of obligation administered to all members on their initiation constituted the taking of such obligation. Richardson was accidentally killed on January 3, 1902, and Emma A. Richardson, the beneficiary named in his certificate, brought this action to recover from the plaintiff in error \$1,000, the amount of said certificate, alleging that the deceased was a member of Fort Collins council No. 208 at the time of his death, and that each and every condition precedent on the part of the deceased and of the beneficiary had been complied with as provided in the application and

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certificate, and in accordance with the constitution, rules and regulations of the order.

The principal defense was that Richardson had never become a member of the order, and that he had never complied with sections 18 and 20 of the by-laws of the supreme council, and sections 28 and 29 of the by-laws of the subordinate councils of the order. These by-laws required the payment of one advance assessment upon the receipt by a member of his certificate, the following being an extract from section 28 of the by-laws of the subordinate councils: "The applicant shall not be a member in good standing and entitled to benefits until he or she has received his or her certificate and paid one advance assessment." The following is an extract from section 20 of the by-laws of the supreme council: "Every person desiring benefits shall, on entering the order, pay one assessment, 20 per cent. of which shall be placed in the reserve fund, and after the first 12 assessments 80 per cent. of each assessment shall be placed in the benefit fund, which shall be used only to pay benefits to the members of the order in good standing holding benefit certificates." Richardson not being present when the subordinate council was organized the worthy councilor returned his certificate to Mr. Collins, the deputy organizer, who some time afterwards returned it to the worthy councilor. January 9, 1902, James T. Ogden, supreme worthy vice-councilor of the order, went to Fort Collins, and on his request Benjamin F. Evans, worthy councilor of Fort Collins council No. 208, delivered to him Richardson's certificate, taking his receipt therefor. At the date of the commencement of this action the certificate was in possession of the supreme council of the order, and on the application for membership some officer of the supreme council had indorsed the following: "Applicant failed to be present at organization of council and certificate returned and cancelled." A trial of the case resulted in a verdict for Mrs. Richardson, the beneficiary, and the supreme council has taken error from a judgment rendered thereon.

It is insisted by the defendant in error that Charles C.

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Richardson was a member of the order notwithstanding his failure to be present at the organization of Fort Collins council No. 208, and notwithstanding he was never regularly initiated and obligated. In the application signed by Richardson is printed the following obligation: "I, the undersigned, in the presence of these witnesses and the Eternal God, do most solemnly promise that I will not reveal, but ever hold in strict confidence, the mysteries and secret work of the Loyal Mystic Legion of America; that I take this obligation of my own free will; that I will be faithful to and abide by the constitution and by-laws of the supreme, grand, and subordinate councils of the order; that I will strive to promote harmony and friendship among its members, deal justly and honestly with each member and family; that I will, to the best of my ability, aid in all proper ways to promote the interests of the order; that should I ever become delinquent or be suspended, and thereby forfeit my good standing in the order, I will regard this obligation just as binding upon me then as I do at this hour. To all of which I do hereby solemnly pledge my sacred honor. I hereby agree to the above conditions and obligations, and accept notice of the fact that no subordinate council has power or authority to waive the same."

Defendant in error insists that the signing of the application containing this form of obligation is, as to charter members, a taking of the obligation within the meaning of the constitution and by-laws of the order. We cannot agree with this contention. The application bears upon its face evidence that it is the form of application furnished by the grand council of the order to all applicants, those applying for membership in a council already organized, as well as those seeking to constitute and organize a new council. It contains blanks for the report of an investigating committee and for the report to be made by such committee. There is also the blank to be filled in by the secretary showing when the application was received by the council and the date of the election of the applicant. It is quite evident from an inspection of the application that the

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obligation required on initiation is included therein that proposed members may be informed of the vow which they will be required to take in case they are accepted into the order. Section 22 of the constitution of the supreme council, and section 3 of the by-laws of subordinate councils directing the proceedings to form a subordinate council, make it quite plain that each of the charter members shall be present at the organization and be duly obligated, and that until this is done the applicant cannot be considered a member of the order. As said in *Matkin v. Supreme Lodge*, 27 Am. St. Rep. 886, 82 Tex. 301.

"Where it appears from the constitution and by-laws of a secret order or benefit society which insures the lives of its members that initiation is indispensable to membership, and that it is only upon the death of a member that his beneficiary is entitled to receive his insurance, the fact that a person's application for membership has been accepted, and his 'proposition fee' paid, will not entitle his beneficiary to any insurance in the event of his death before he has become initiated as a member of the society."

The best consideration which we have been able to give this case satisfies us that, under the rules and regulations of the order as defined in its constitution and by-laws, Richardson never became a member of the society and that his certificate never had any life or vitality. This conclusion renders it unnecessary to discuss other questions raised by the record and discussed in the briefs of counsel.

We recommend a reversal of the judgment.

**ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.**

**By the Court:** For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded.

**REVERSED.**

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Thomas v. Farmers Loan & Trust Co.

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**JOSEPH W. THOMAS, APPELLANT, V. FARMERS LOAN &  
TRUST COMPANY ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,281.

**Tax Title: SETTING ASIDE.** A party who seeks the aid of the court to contest and invalidate the claim of one claiming title and possession of land under a sale for delinquent taxes must show that all taxes justly thereon have been paid either by himself or the party through whom he claims.

**APPEAL from the district court for Knox county: JOHN F. BOYD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*Joel W. West, for appellant.*

*W. L. Henderson, E. A. Houston and M. J. Sweeney,  
contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

In April, 1896, one James F. Toy, acting for the Farmers Loan & Trust Company, obtained a tax deed to a quarter section of land in Knox county, the title to which is involved in this action. Afterwards, in 1901, the Farmers Loan & Trust Company contracted to sell the land to the defendant Nellis, who paid \$175 of the agreed consideration, took possession of the land and was in possession at the date of the commencement of this action. Plaintiff and appellant, claiming to be the owner of the patent title, brought this action to quiet his title, to set aside the treasurer's deed and the contract of sale to Nellis, and also a quitclaim deed made by a former owner of the land after he had conveyed by warranty deed to the plaintiff's immediate grantor, but which deed of warranty was not of record when the quitclaim deed was made.

Several questions are raised by the parties, but we think that the decree of the district court dismissing the plaintiff's petition must be affirmed, for the reason that when

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the action was commenced there were two or three years' unpaid taxes standing against the land. Section 221, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1905, provides: "In all controversies and suits involving the title to real property claimed and held under and by virtue of a deed made substantially as aforesaid by the treasurer the person claiming the title adverse to the title conveyed by such deed shall be required to prove \* \* \* that all taxes due upon the property had been paid by such person or the persons under whom he claims title as aforesaid." This section was adopted from the Iowa statute, and in *Maxwell v. Palmer*, 73 Ia. 595, the supreme court, in construing it, held that the purpose of the provision that no person shall gain the title acquired by a treasurer's deed, without showing that all taxes upon the property have been paid by him or the person under whom he claims, is to enforce the payment of taxes and stimulate landowners to discharge the duty imposed on all citizens to pay taxes levied upon their lands. It is not sufficient in the petition attacking a tax title to offer to pay taxes if plaintiff is found to be entitled to redeem. The purpose of the statute is beneficial to the public interest. It recognizes the equity of requiring a party who seeks the aid of the courts of the state to reclaim his land sold in consequence of his failure to pay his share of the public burden, to discharge all unpaid taxes standing against the land as a condition precedent to invoking the assistance of the court. It is true that the tax deed in the case at bar is void for want of a seal, but the party claiming title through it was in possession, and the deed gave him color of title which would ripen into a perfect title if not dispossessed for ten years. It cannot be said, therefore, that the treasurer's deed was ineffectual for all purposes, and before the party in possession under it can be disturbed the conditions of the statute should be complied with. We recommend an affirmance of the judgment of the district court.

**ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.**

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Mannion v. Talboy.

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**JOHN MANNION v. W. R. TALBOY.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,288.

The instructions of the court should direct the attention of the jury only to facts in support of which evidence has been introduced upon the trial. When an instruction is not founded upon the evidence, and is calculated to mislead the jury in considering the facts of the case, the judgment must be reversed.

ERROR to the district court for Dixon county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*W. E. Gantt and George W. Argo, for plaintiff in error.*

*McCarthy & McCarthy and John V. Pearson, contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

The plaintiff, Mannion, in his petition filed in the district court, alleges that on or about September 15, 1899, he was lawfully standing on the sidewalk on the west side of Louis street and near the east side of a store building occupied by one Hoy, in the village of Newcastle, Dixon county, Nebraska; that the defendant, Talboy, without any notice or warning to plaintiff, and unlawfully, wrongfully and maliciously, with force and violence, pushed and shoved a man, whose name plaintiff has been informed is John Coleman, against and on the plaintiff, causing plaintiff to be thrown violently into a narrow hole in said sidewalk and against said brick store building aforesaid; that in his fall the plaintiff's left foot and leg went down into the said hole, while his right foot and leg remained on the sidewalk; that he was severely and permanently injured

thereby; that his head struck against the side of the brick building with such force and violence that his left ear and ear drum were permanently injured and the hearing thereof affected; that his back and spine were permanently injured, and other severe and permanent bodily injuries sustained. The answer admits that the plaintiff was standing on the sidewalk, and that he stepped or slipped into a hole or opening in the walk. It denies every other allegation in the petition contained. Defendant further alleges that plaintiff was, at the time of the injury complained of and for a long time prior thereto had been, suffering from the effects of disease and of injuries with which the defendant had no connection; that for a long time prior to the injuries complained of plaintiff had been suffering from afflictions such as are described in his petition; that the same were the result of disease and injuries sustained long prior to the time of the accident described in the petition; that plaintiff was never in any manner injured or damaged in stepping or slipping into the hole in the walk. A second defense raised the question of the plaintiff's contributory negligence; and a third defense is pleaded to the effect that any damage or injury sustained by the plaintiff was the direct and proximate result of the carelessness and negligence of a third person, not the servant or agent of the defendant, and without any fault or negligence of any kind on the part of the defendant. A reply put in issue the affirmative matters set out in the answer. A trial resulted in a verdict for the defendant, and from a judgment entered on the verdict the plaintiff has taken error.

Exceptions are taken to the eighth instruction of the court which is in the following language: "You are instructed that if you believe from the evidence that defendant did not push a third person against the plaintiff, or that plaintiff was thrown into said alleged opening in said sidewalk by some person other than defendant, or by the careless or negligent acts of the plaintiff he fell into said hole and was injured, then plaintiff cannot recover and your verdict should be for the defendant." The ninth

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*Mannion v. Talboy.*

paragraph of the charge, to which exception is also taken, is as follows: "You are instructed that if you believe from the evidence that defendant pushed a third person against plaintiff in any manner so as to precipitate him into the opening in the walk as alleged, and resulting therefrom plaintiff was injured as alleged, and if you believe that said injuries were the result in whole or in part of the careless and negligent act of plaintiff contributing thereto, or that he was not at the time exercising ordinary care to avoid personal injury, or that he in fact sustained no injury from the fall, then plaintiff cannot recover and your verdict should be for the defendant."

We have read the evidence with some care. It shows that at the date of the accident complained of the plaintiff was standing on the sidewalk described in the petition talking with one Coleman; that a number of other persons were standing or sitting on the walk; that the defendant, in passing by, gave Coleman a push, and it tends to show that as the result Coleman was shoved against the plaintiff who was pushed back into the hole in the walk in the manner described in the petition. There is no word of evidence in the record tending to show that the plaintiff himself was guilty of any negligence. There is no evidence tending to show that he himself contributed to the injury. There is no evidence tending to show that the accident occurred in consequence of the act of any third party. Under these circumstances it was error for the court to frame his instructions in such a manner as to allow the jury to infer or find facts of which there was no evidence. The charge of the court to the jury should always be founded on and applicable to the testimony, and when it is not, and is calculated to mislead the jury in considering the facts of the case, the judgment ought to be reversed. *Kilpatrick v. Richardson*, 37 Neb. 731; *Farmers & Merchants Bank v. Upham*, 37 Neb. 417; *Esterly H. M. Co. v. Frolkey*, 34 Neb. 110; *Farmers Loan & Trust Co. v. Montgomery*, 30 Neb. 33; *City of York v. Spellman*, 19 Neb. 357.

There are other errors alleged relating to the admission

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of evidence, but, as the case will have to be reversed and remanded for a new trial, they are not likely to again occur and do not require a discussion in this opinion. For the errors above pointed out, we recommend a reversal of the judgment and that the cause be remanded for another trial.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for another trial.

REVERSED.

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THOMAS D. MURPHY COMPANY v. EXCHANGE NATIONAL  
BANK OF HASTINGS.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,305.

**Sale: Action.** Before a seller can maintain an action on the contract for the agreed price of a chattel, there must be such a delivery, actual or constructive, as will pass the title and vest the ownership of the property in the purchaser. If the possession and the title remain in the seller, and the purchaser renounces his contract, the law requires the seller to treat the property as his own, and to sue, if at all, for the damages he has sustained.

ERROR to the district court for Adams county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*J. W. James*, for plaintiff in error.

*Tibbets Bros. & Morey, contra.*

DUFFIE, C.

On April 4, 1902, The Exchange National Bank of Hastings, Nebraska, gave an order to the Thomas D. Murphy Company for 250 calendars and 250 tubes to be deliv-

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ered on or about December 1 of that year. The order provided that it was not subject to countermand and that neither party should be bound by any verbal contract. On April 28, 1902, the bank wrote the Murphy company as follows: "We wish hereby to countermand our order for calendars placed with your Mr Kain on April 23. Total amount of bill \$28.50. Please take notice." In reply to this letter the Murphy company refused to cancel the order, and sometime in the latter part of November shipped the goods to Hastings, Nebraska, where they were tendered to the bank, which refused to accept them. Thereafter this suit was brought by the Murphy company for the contract price of the goods, amounting to \$28.50. A trial was had to the court without a jury and judgment entered for the defendant.

The Murphy company insist that judgment should have gone in its favor; that the rule obtains in this state that, where a party refuses to accept goods which have been ordered, the other party may keep the goods and sue for his damages or, upon tender of the goods and refusal to accept them, may sue upon the contract for the agreed price. It may be that some of our former decisions support this view, but we think the rule has now become well established that, where title to the goods has not passed, where the contract, as in this case, is executory, the only remedy of the vendor, where the vendee refuses to accept the goods, is to sue for his damages for breach of the contract. The rule is well stated in *McCormick H. M. Co. v. Balfany*, 78 Minn. 370, 79 Am. St. Rep. 393, in the following language:

"Before a seller can maintain an action for the agreed price of a chattel, there must be such a delivery, actual or constructive, as will pass the title and vest the ownership of the property in the purchaser. If the possession and the title remain in the seller, and the purchaser renounces his contract, the law requires the seller to treat the property as his own, and to sue, if at all, for the damages he has sustained."

Whatever doubt may have existed in relation to the rule in this state was set at rest by the opinion in *Funke v. Allen*, 54 Neb. 407, where it is said:

"If a vendee in an executory contract of sale, or where the title of the property has not passed to him, refuses to perform, a right of action for damages arises in favor of the vendor for the injury or loss he has sustained by reason of the breach of the contract, and this is ordinarily or generally the difference between the market value of the property at the time and place of delivery, and the price fixed by the contract."

This rule was followed and approved in *Backes v. Black*, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 74. The latest expression of this court is found in *Hixson Map Co. v. Nebraska Post Co.*, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 388, where it is said:

"Either party to an executory contract may abandon or renounce his contract at any time before performance is due, on the usual terms of compensation to the other for damages which the law recognizes and allows, subject to the jurisdiction of equity and decree of specific performance in proper cases."

The contract sued on is clearly executory. The goods were to be manufactured and delivered at a later day. Title had not passed to the vendee, and title was not to pass until delivery of the goods about December 1 of the year in which the contract was made. As early as April the vendee gave notice of its intention to abandon the contract. It is probable, under the holding in *Hixson Map Co. v. Nebraska Post Co.*, *supra*, that action for breach of the contract could not be maintained until the time for delivery had passed, and that until that time the vendee might have withdrawn its refusal to proceed with the contract. The vendee, however, did not recant, but stood upon its notice of refusal to receive the goods. In this condition of the case no action can be maintained on the contract by the vendor. It has a right of action for damages for breach of the contract, but not upon the contract for the agreed price of the goods.

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The judgment of the district court is clearly right, and we recommend its affirmance.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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WILLIAM A. FOSTER, ADMINISTRATOR, v. DENNIS MURPHY.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,301.

1. **Probate Court: APPEALABLE ORDER.** An order of a probate court requiring one who had formerly been administrator of an estate to turn over to his successor certain money, claimed by the former to have been given to him as a gift from the intestate, but by the latter that it came to him as administrator of the estate, is appealable to the district court.
2. **Decedents: GIFT.** Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain a finding that the money in question had come into the hands of the former administrator personally as a gift by the intestate, and not as a part of the assets of the estate.
3. **Witnesses: COMPETENCY.** The interest of the former administrator's wife in the result of such contest is not a direct legal interest within the meaning of the statute which prohibits a person from testifying to any transaction or conversation had with a deceased person, where the adverse party is the representative of such deceased person.
4. **Gift.** The indorsement and delivery of a certificate of deposit, with the intention of making a gift of the deposit thereby represented to the party to whom the certificate is thus delivered, operates as a gift of the fund itself.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*E. M. Bartlett and W. N. Chambers*, for plaintiff in error.

*F. C. O'Halloren and E. C. Page*, contra.

**ALBERT, C.**

On the 30th day of September, 1902, Dennis Murphy, the defendant, filed a petition in the county court of Douglas county for letters of administration on the estate of his brother, Edmund Murphy, deceased. His appointment followed, and afterwards on the 29th day of October, 1902, he filed an inventory, listing certain real estate, and showing that \$600 represented a certain certificate of deposit, and \$12.58 found on the person of the deceased had come into his possession as assets of the estate. Afterwards, on the 6th day of November of the same year, he filed an amended inventory, again listing the real estate, but omitting the money listed in the former inventory and noting that it had been there listed by mistake. For reasons not necessary to mention he was afterwards removed from his trust, and William A. Foster, the plaintiff, was appointed in his stead. It does not appear that the defendant ever made, or was ever asked to make, a settlement of his accounts as administrator. On the 13th day of May, 1903, the plaintiff made application in writing to the county court for an order requiring the defendant to pay over to him, as administrator, the \$600 listed on the first inventory as the proceeds of a certificate of deposit and part of the assets of the estate. The defendant filed an answer, alleging that the certificate of deposit had been indorsed and transferred to him by the deceased during his last illness as a gift and in expectation of death, and that he retained possession thereof until after the death of the deceased. The answer further alleges that in listing the proceeds of the certificate as part of the assets of the estate he acted in ignorance of his rights, and upon the advice of the clerk of the county court and at the request of the bank who had issued the certificate. The county court found that the money belonged to the estate, and entered an order requiring the defendant to pay it over to the plaintiff as the administrator thereof. The defendant appealed to the district court, whereupon the plaintiff filed a motion to

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dismiss the appeal on the ground that the order was not a final order or determination of the rights of the parties. The motion was overruled and a hearing had on the merits. The district court found for the defendant, and gave judgment accordingly. The plaintiff brings error.

It is insisted that the finding of the district court is not sustained by sufficient evidence. The deceased was a bachelor. His next of kin are the defendant, who resides in Omaha, and two sisters in Ireland. During his last illness he was an inmate of St. Joseph's Hospital in Omaha. Before entering the hospital he deposited \$600 in a bank of that city, receiving therefor a certificate of deposit. Aside from some real estate of small value he had no other property, save a trifling amount of money found on his person after his death. He was a laboring man and uneducated. The defendant's wife was sworn as a witness in his behalf. The plaintiff objected to her competency, basing his objection on section 329 of the code, which provides that "no person having a direct legal interest in the result of any civil action or proceeding, when the adverse party is the representative of a deceased person, shall be permitted to testify to any transaction or conversation had between the deceased person and the witness." The objection was overruled, and the witness testified in effect that about two weeks before the death of the deceased she called upon him at the hospital, and he told her that he wanted the defendant to come to the hospital and have the certificate of deposit in question signed over to him; that she and her husband called that evening, and, upon their arrival, the deceased asked one of the attendants to bring him his belongings; that thereupon the attendant retired and soon returned with a pocketbook which she placed in his hands; that he took therefrom the certificate of deposit and handed it to the defendant, saying, "What is there is yours, and if anything should happen you will know what to do with it"; that he then asked an attendant to bring pen and ink, and, when it was brought, asked the defendant to indorse the certificate for him, whereupon the defendant wrote the de-

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ceased's name on the certificate, the latter holding the pen at the same time; that he then handed the certificate to the defendant who retained it until after the deceased died. Two of the attendants of the hospital were also sworn and examined on behalf of the defendant. Both corroborate the wife as to the visit of herself and husband to the deceased on the evening in question. One of them testified that on the occasion of that visit the deceased called for his belongings, and she brought him his pocketbook, placed it in his hands and withdrew from the room. The other testified to his request for pen and ink at that time; that she brought them for him, and, like the other, immediately withdrew from the room in accordance with some rule of the hospital. She also testified to a previous conversation with the deceased in which he expressed an intention to give the property to the defendant. The substance of defendant's explanation of his listing the proceeds of the certificate as a part of the assets of the estate is as follows: That he presented it to the bank, but the bank refused to cash it, fearing some trouble in case it did. He then went to the office of the county judge, where he found a clerk to whom he explained the situation with respect to the certificate, and told him that the bank had directed him to get an order from the county judge with respect to its payment. The clerk told him he could not get an order of that kind, and that he had better "put his certificate in for probate." He then made application for letters of administration, and, after his appointment, listed the certificate as cash in the bank. In order to get the money he afterwards indorsed the certificate as administrator. The evidence is ample to show that the defendant included the \$600 in the first inventory simply because he was ignorant of his rights, and that he undertook to correct his error in that regard by the amended inventory as soon as he was duly advised.

The indorsement and delivery of the certificate of deposit to the defendant, during the lifetime of the deceased, is conclusively established. That it was thus indorsed and

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delivered by the deceased with the intention of making a gift of the deposit thereby represented, is clear. That being true, it acted as a gift of the fund itself. *Crook v. First Nat. Bank*, 83 Wis. 31, 35 Am. St. Rep. 17, and extended note. Whether it be regarded as a gift *inter vivos* or *causa mortis* is immaterial for present purposes, because, as said in the case cited, quoting Cole, J., in *Wilson v. Carpenter*, 17 Wis. 516, "Delivery is essential both at law and in equity to the validity of a parol gift of a chattel or chose in action; and it is the same whether it be a gift *inter vivos* or *causa mortis*. Without actual delivery the title does not pass." The defendant's rights are not prejudiced by his subsequently listing the money as assets of the estate. His doing so was owing to a lack of experience in such matters, and in ignorance of the consequence of such a step. No estoppel arises therefrom, because no one, because of such act, changed his position to his prejudice.

It is also contended that the order of the county court requiring the defendant to pay over the \$600 is not a final order, and, consequently, that the district court erred in overruling the motion to dismiss the appeal. The order has all the elements of one that is final. The issue presented by the pleadings was whether the \$600 was a part of the assets of the estate or a gift to the defendant by the deceased during his lifetime. The county court found that the money belonged to the estate and entered an order accordingly. We know of no reason why such order would not be final and conclusive unless reversed on appeal or error. It is suggested, however, that the defendant instead of taking an appeal might have paid over the \$600 and filed a claim against the estate therefor. Our answer to that is that the county court had already determined that the money belonged to the estate. That question was foreclosed by the order in question, and certainly no claim against the estate could arise from the payment to the administrator of money belonging to it.

Another contention is that the defendant's wife was incompetent to testify in his behalf, her relation to the

defendant being such as to give her an interest in the result of the controversy. The statute prohibiting a person testifying to any transaction or conversation had with a deceased person, where the adverse party is the representative of such deceased person, applies only to those having a direct legal interest, and not to those whose interest is indirect or remote. In *Gillette v. Morrison*, 9 Neb. 395, the court said:

"Counsel for the defendant make the point that plaintiff offered no testimony as to demand of payment of the note of Mumford and notice on Heffley, except Lee P. Gillette, the husband of plaintiff. That under the laws of 1873, Gen. St. p. 582, section 329, this witness, being the plaintiff's husband, and having a direct legal interest in the result of the suit, was incompetent. That hence the plaintiff offered no testimony on that point. The section referred to reads as follows: \* \* \* 'Nor shall any person, having a direct legal interest in the result of any civil cause or proceeding, be a competent witness therein when the adverse party is an executor, administrator, or legal representative of a deceased person.' The note sued on has been treated throughout the controversy as the separate property of the plaintiff. It has not been shown to have been in the possession of Lee P. Gillette, except for the purpose of presentation for payment, which he swears he did by authority of the plaintiff. If it is her separate property, then her husband has no direct legal interest in the result of the suit."

In *Hiskett v. Bozarth*, 75 Neb. 70, it was held that the husband's contingent right of courtesy in the land would not bring him within that section, in an action brought by his wife against the representatives of a deceased person for the specific performance of a contract of the deceased for the sale of land to her. If the husbands were competent witnesses in those cases, we are unable to see why the wife should be held incompetent in this. Counsel rely on *Kroh v. Heins*, 48 Neb. 691. The cases are not parallel. There the witness was not held incompetent because of her indirect interest as mother of the infant defendants, but

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because of a direct, personal interest in the subject matter of the suit.

We discover no error in the record, and therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

JACKSON, C., concurs.

DUFFIE, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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WILLIAM H. THORNHILL V. ALFRED E. HARGREAVES ET AL.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,313.

1. **Appearance.** The word "appear," when used to designate a step taken in litigation by a defendant, means the act or proceeding by which he places himself before the court and submits to its jurisdiction. It does not necessarily imply the actual physical presence either of the party or his attorney before the court.
2. ———: **CONFESSiON OF JUDGMENT.** Plaintiffs filed a petition against the defendants in the county court (a term case) stating a cause of action on a past due note. A paper signed by the defendants, duly entitled and filed in the cause, contained a waiver of service of process and a confession of the debt, and authorized the court to enter judgment against them thereon. Neither of the defendants nor any attorney acting for them were ever actually in the presence of the court in the cause. *Held*, That such paper, when filed, constituted a personal appearance on the part of the defendants within the meaning of section 433 of the code authorizing judgments by confession, and that the defendants thereby submitted themselves to the jurisdiction of the court.
3. **Appeal: DISMISSAL.** Where the plaintiff in a civil action appeals from the judgment of the county court to the district court, he has the same right to dismiss his action without prejudice as though it had originated in the district court.
4. **Judgment: RES JUDICATA.** In such case the dismissal does not

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operate as an affirmance of the judgment of the inferior court, and such judgment is not available in bar of a future action on the same demand.

5. ——: REVIVOR. Where an order of revivor by apt language shows a revivor of the judgment, the fact that it does not expressly award execution does not invalidate it.

ERROR to the district court for Hitchcock county: ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*W. F. Button, F. I. Foss and C. W. Shurtleff*, for plaintiff in error.

*W. S. Morlan, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

In the several proceedings in the lower court herein-after mentioned, Alfred E. and Walter B. Hargreaves were plaintiffs, and William H. Thornhill and Winniford G. Hills were defendants, and for convenience we shall thus designate them here as we may have occasion to refer to them from time to time. On the 16th day of April, 1894, the plaintiffs filed a petition in the county court of Hitchcock county, asking judgment against the defendants on a certain promissory note, then past due, for \$802.09, with 10 per cent. interest thereon from the 7th day of July, 1893. On the same day a writing signed by both of the defendants was filed in the cause. It is as follows: "In the County Court of Hitchcock County, Nebraska. Alfred E. Hargreaves and Walter B. Hargreaves, trading as Hargreaves Bros., Plaintiffs, v. William H. Thornhill and Winniford G. Hills, trading as Thornhill & Co., Defendants. Confession of Judgment. Come now the above named defendants and enter their voluntary appearance in the above entitled cause. The issuance and service of summons is expressly waived, and said defendants confess that they are indebted to the plaintiffs in the sum of \$802.09 on a certain promissory note made by said defendants and in favor of the plaintiffs. Defendants are justly

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indebted to the plaintiffs in said sum, with interest thereon at the rate of 10 per cent. per annum from the 7th day of July, 1893. The defendants further authorize and empower the said court to render a judgment against them and in favor of the plaintiffs for said sum of \$802.09, and the interest thereon and the costs of suit. The intention being to authorize the court to act as fully in the matter as if summons had been issued and served upon them. In witness whereof said defendants have hereunto set their hands to this confession of judgment of their own free will and accord. W. H. Thornhill, W. G. Hills. In presence of W. Q. Bell, as to Thornhill, D. L. Grum witness to W. G. Hills."

Afterwards, on the same day, the county court entered the following judgment: "And now on the 16th day of April, A. D. 1894, it appearing to the court that the plaintiffs had filed their petition in this cause, and the defendants by their confession of judgment, having waived process and entered their appearance in this cause, and with the consent of the plaintiffs, confess they are indebted to them upon said promissory note in the sum of \$802.09, and ask to have judgment rendered against them therefor, as per confession recorded herein. It is therefore considered by me that the said plaintiffs, Hargreaves Bros., recover from said defendants the sum of \$863.94 the debt so as aforesaid confessed, with interest at 10 per cent. per annum from this date, and also their costs herein expended, taxed at \$1.80." No execution was ever issued on this judgment, and the 3d day of May, 1904, the plaintiffs made an application to have it revived. A conditional order was made, and service thereto had on the defendant Thornhill. He entered an appearance, and resisted the application on substantially the same grounds as those upon which he resisted a second application, and which will be stated hereafter. The county court found that the judgment was void on the ground urged by the defendant Thornhill and denied a revivor thereof. Thereupon the plaintiffs appealed to the district court, but before trial

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filed a motion to dismiss their application for revivor, without prejudice to a future application in that behalf. The motion was sustained, and the application dismissed without prejudice.

Afterwards, on the 29th day of December, 1904, the plaintiffs again applied to the county court for a revivor of the judgment. A conditional order of revivor was made, and served upon the defendant Thornhill; the return of the sheriff showing that the defendant Hills could not be found in the county. The defendant Thornhill answered, resisting a revivor of the judgment on the following grounds: (1) That the judgment was void for the reason that it was rendered without jurisdiction over either of the defendants, in that there had been neither issuance nor service of process upon either of the defendants in the action in which the judgment was rendered, nor had they or either of them personally appeared in said action, nor was the confession made by an attorney, acting in their behalf, upon a warrant of attorney filed as required by law; (2) that the judgment was upon a joint note, and his codefendant Hills was a nonresident of the state, and no service of the conditional order was made upon him either personally or by publication; (3) that the application was barred by the judgment of the county court denying the former application to revive; (4) that the application was barred by the statute of limitations, in that more than five years had elapsed since its rendition, and no execution had ever issued thereon, nor had any part thereof been paid. A trial was had and the matters of record hereinbefore referred to were shown in evidence. In addition to such evidence the defendant Thornhill was sworn and examined as a witness in his own behalf. He testified that he was not present in the county court of Hitchcock county on the 16th day of April, 1894, when the judgment was rendered, and that he never appeared in said action and confessed the judgment in question. He admitted, however, that he signed the written confession of judgment hereinbefore set out at length. The district court found in favor of the

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plaintiffs, and entered the following judgment: "It is therefore considered, ordered and adjudged that the said judgment be, and the same stand, revived for the sum of \$863.74, with interest at 10 per cent. from the 16th day of April, 1894, and costs of this proceeding taxed at \$—." From the foregoing judgment, defendant Thornhill prosecutes error to this court.

It is now contended that the county court was without jurisdiction to render the original judgment by confession, because the defendants neither appeared personally, nor by attorney acting under a proper warrant of attorney to confess the judgment. It is conceded that the confession filed in the cause, and upon which the judgment is based, was signed by the defendants, but it is insisted that the statute authorizing the taking of a judgment by confession and without service of process requires either the actual physical appearance of the debtor himself, or of an attorney acting under due warrant of attorney to confess the judgment. The provisions of the code relied on are as follows:

Section 433. "Any person indebted or against whom a cause of action exists may personally appear, in a court of competent jurisdiction, and, with the assent of the creditor or person having such cause of action, confess judgment therefor, whereupon judgment shall be entered accordingly."

Section 436. "Every attorney who shall confess judgment in any case shall, at the time of making such confession, produce the warrant of attorney for making the same to the court before which he makes the confession, and the original, or a copy of the warrant, shall be filed with the clerk of the court in which the judgment shall be entered."

The proceedings in this case are not necessarily limited by section 433. This was not a confession of judgment without pleadings and process. The action was regularly begun by the filing of a petition. The paper filed by the defendants was properly treated as an affirmation and admission of the allegations of the petition. In such

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case it is not essential that the defendant be physically present before the court. 11 Ency. Pl. & Pr. 973, par. IX and note. *Rosebrough v. Ansley*, 35 Ohio St. 107. The act or proceeding by which a defendant places himself before the court and submits to its jurisdiction does not necessarily involve the actual, physical presence either of the party or his attorney before the court. It is well known that the filing of a motion, demurrer or other pleading constitutes an appearance although the party may never have been actually in the presence of the court. In *Salina Nat. Bank v. Prescott*, 60 Kans. 490, 57 Pac. 121, a paper signed by a defendant and properly entitled and filed in a cause, wherein he waived the service of process and recited that he entered an appearance, was held to constitute an appearance on the part of such defendant. In this case the plaintiffs filed their petition against the defendants. It will be conceded that if, instead of filing the paper acknowledging the debt and authorizing the court to enter a judgment against them for the amount thereof, the defendants had answered, denying any liability to the plaintiffs and objecting to judgment against them on such debt, they would have thereby submitted themselves to the jurisdiction of the court, and a judgment against them would not have been void for want of jurisdiction. Common sense rebels at the suggestion that a denial of liability is more effective for jurisdictional purposes than a confession.

Counsel rely with much confidence on *Howell v. Gilt Edge Mfg. Co.*, 32 Neb. 627, but that is not a parallel case. There the debtor was a corporation. As a corporation of necessity must always act through its agents, it is incapable of appearing personally, hence, a compliance with section 433 in that respect was impossible. The only way left for it to appear was by attorney. But section 436 provides that, when the confession is by attorney, he shall produce his warrant of attorney, and that the same or a copy thereof shall be filed in the case. In that case no warrant of attorney was produced or filed, and the judg-

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ment was rendered without service of process and upon the bare confession of one claiming to act as "general manager" for the corporation. This court held that the record failed to show jurisdiction and that the judgment was void. That case is governed by section 436, and is clearly distinguishable from the present which shows a compliance with section 433.

It is contended, further, that the application for revivor is *res judicata*. The argument in support of this contention is based on the proposition that, judgment having gone against the plaintiffs in their first application in the county court, and the plaintiffs after an appeal to the district court having dismissed such application, the judgment of the county court on the first application is in full force and effect, and constitutes a bar to the present application to revive the judgment. In this argument counsel do not appear to distinguish between the dismissal of an appeal and the dismissal of a cause of action pending on appeal, because many of the cases cited deal only with the effect of the former. Section 26, ch. 20, Comp. St., provides that in civil actions brought in the county court either party may appeal from the judgment of the county court, or prosecute a petition in error, in the same manner as provided by law in cases tried and determined by justices of the peace. Section 1010 of the code provides that in case of appeal to the district court the parties shall proceed in all respects in the same manner as though the action had been originally instituted in said court. Section 430 provides that an action may be dismissed without prejudice to a future action by the plaintiff before the final submission of the cause to the jury, or to the court, where the trial is by the court.

But counsel contend that the dismissal of the first application in the district court was after its final submission to the county court, and, consequently, that the statutory provision quoted does not apply. This court held otherwise, in *Home Fire Ins. Co. v. Deets*, 54 Neb. 620, but counsel contend that the case should be overruled.

No authorities have been presented supporting that contention, nor have we been able to find any. The argument in support of it is far from convincing, because it proves too much. Carried to its logical conclusion it would show that a plaintiff could not dismiss without prejudice after a disagreement of a jury or the granting of a new trial. But this court has held that the right to dismiss his cause may be exercised by a plaintiff after reversal and remand for a new trial. *Adams v. Osgood*, 55 Neb. 766. See, also, *Currie v. Southern P. Co.*, 23 Or. 400, 31 Pac. 963; 14 Cyc. 406. The right to dismiss without prejudice is co-existent with the right to submit the cause on the merits, and, as the latter right unquestionably existed in this case, the plaintiff could exercise the former as an alternative. We are satisfied with the rule announced in *Home Fire Ins. Co. v. Deets, supra*, and know of no good reason why it should be overruled.

Another contention of the defendant is that the county court of Hitchcock county had nothing before it, in the way of an affidavit or other evidence, to show that the judgment sought to be revived was unpaid, but we do not know whether it had or not. The certificate of the clerk does not purport to set out the complete transcript of the proceedings had in the county court. Consequently, the effect of the omission to file such affidavit in the county court, if there was such an omission, is not presented by the record. We might add, however, that such affidavit is not commonly regarded as jurisdictional.

It is further contended that the judgment having been rendered on a joint liability, and being joint in form, the judgment of revivor, which was rendered on service had upon one of the defendants, is therefore erroneous. The action proceeded in form against both of the defendants. The conditional order was served upon one of them, and the return of the officer shows that the other could not be found in the county. The defendant who was served answered, alleging the nonresidence of his codefendant in the state. The rules of procedure in original actions, so far as

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applicable, govern proceedings to revive. In an original suit on a joint obligation the action must proceed in form against all of the joint obligors. But section 84 of the code provides that, if the action be against defendants jointly indebted upon contract, the plaintiff may proceed against the defendant served, unless the court otherwise direct. In *Fox v. Abbott*, 12 Neb. 328, the foregoing provision was held applicable to proceedings to revive a joint judgment.

The judgment of the district court is next assailed on the ground that it does not provide for the issuance of an execution on the judgment. In support of this contention many cases are cited, none of which, to our minds, appear to be in point. The proceeding is aptly called a proceeding to revive a judgment. As applied to a dormant judgment the word "revive" means to restore or bring the judgment to life. As the judgment stood originally it carried with it, as one of its incidents, the right to have it enforced by the process of the court. The order of revivor, hereinbefore set out at length, restores it to life with all its original qualities, and it is now enforceable in precisely the same way it was enforceable before it became dormant—by execution. Even were we to concede that the court should have expressly awarded execution, we are not quite clear as to how the defendant is in any way prejudiced by the omission. But we do not concede that. In our opinion, it is no more necessary to expressly award execution in an order of revivor than in the original judgment. Other questions are discussed, but we think they are disposed of by what has already been said.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

JACKSON, C., concurs.

DUFFIE, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY RAILWAY COMPANY V.  
CHARLES H. KING.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,824.

1. **Railroads: FENCES: INJURY TO STOCK.** Section 1, art. I, ch. 72, Comp. St., making railroad companies liable for injuries to stock upon their failure to maintain fences along the right of way and cattle-guards at highway crossings was not intended to provide a penalty for failure to maintain such safeguards, but merely to render such companies liable to the owner of stock injured in consequence of such failure.
2. A petition for damages for the loss of stock based on said section, which contains no allegation tracing such loss to the failure of the railroad company to maintain fences or cattle-guards, is fatally defective.
3. Petition examined, and held that the facts therein stated are insufficient to constitute a cause of action.

ERROR to the district court for Red Willow county:  
ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. Reversed.

*J. W. Deweese and F. E. Bishop, for plaintiff in error.*

*Starr & Reeder, contra.*

ALBERT, C.

The petition filed in the court below is as follows: "(1) That the defendant, The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railway Company, is a corporation incorporated under the laws of the state of Iowa and doing business under the laws of the state of Nebraska. (2) That on or about the 24th day of August, 1903, said defendant was operating a railroad through Red Willow county, Nebraska (said railroad having been opened and operated for more than six months in said county), and while so operating said road, at the time above stated, at a place on said road therein where said road crosses a public highway, running north and south between sections 9 and 10, in township 3 north

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of range 27 west of the sixth principal meridian, in Nebraska, where said road is required by law to provide suitable crossings and guards, suitable and sufficient to prevent cattle from getting onto said railroad, but had failed to do so, said defendant, by its agents and employees, ran an engine and train of cars over and upon nine head of two year old steers, being the property of the plaintiff, and of the value of \$270, by reason of which said stock was killed, to the damage of the plaintiff in the sum of \$270. Wherefore plaintiff prays judgment against said defendant for his damages herein sustained, for the sum of \$270 and costs of suit." An answer was filed, admitting the corporate character of the defendant, and that at date alleged in the petition it was, and for more than six months had been, operating the railroad described in the petition, but denying each and all of the other allegations of the petition. Subsequently, and before the trial, a motion for judgment on the pleadings and an objection to the introduction of any evidence by the plaintiff, for the reason that the facts stated in the petition were not sufficient to constitute a cause of action, were successively filed by the defendant and overruled by the court. A trial to a jury resulted in a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff (the defendant in error in this court), and the defendant brings error.

The sole question presented by the record is whether the facts stated in the petition are sufficient to constitute a cause of action. The action is based on section 1, art. I, ch. 72, Comp. St. 1905, which is as follows: "That every railroad corporation whose lines of road or any part thereof are open for use shall, within six months after the passage of this act, and every railroad company formed or to be formed, but whose lines are not now open for use, shall, within six months after the lines of such railroad or any part thereof are open, erect and thereafter maintain fences on the sides of their said railroad, or the part thereof so open for use, suitable and amply sufficient to prevent cattle, horses, sheep and hogs from getting on the said railroad, except at the crossings of public roads and

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highways, and within the limits of towns, cities and villages, with openings, or gates, or bars at all the farm crossings of such railroads, for the use of the proprietors of the lands adjoining such railroad, and shall also construct, where the same has not already been done, and hereafter maintain at all road crossings, now existing or hereafter established, cattle-guards suitable and sufficient to prevent cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs from getting onto such railroad, and so long as such fences and cattle-guards shall (not) be made after the time hereinbefore prescribed for making the same shall have elapsed, and when such fences and guards, or any part thereof, are not in sufficiently good repair to accomplish the objects for which the same is herein prescribed, is intended, such railroad corporation and its agents shall be liable for any and all damages which shall be done by the agents, engines or trains of any such corporation, or by the locomotives, engines or trains of any other corporations permitted and running over or upon their said railroad, to any cattle, horses, sheep or hogs thereon; and when such fences and guards have been fully and duly made, and shall be kept in good and sufficient repair, such railroad corporation shall not be liable for any such damages, unless negligently or wilfully done." The object of the foregoing section was to prevent cattle from straying from adjoining lands to the track or right of way of railroads, and to prevent them from passing from the public highway, at railroad crossings, to the railroad track or right of way at either side, and to provide a remedy for the owner of stock injured in consequence of the omission of a railroad company to maintain the fences and guards thereby required. But there is no allegation in the petition that the failure of the railroad company to maintain suitable cattle-guards at the crossing in question was the proximate, or even the remote, cause of the injury to cattle, nor that such injury is in any way traceable to the company's omission in that regard.

The plaintiff contends, however, that his petition is in the language of the statute, and that his right to recover

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under the statute is not dependent upon whether the injury to his stock is traceable to the defendant's omission to maintain cattle-guards at the crossing. This, as all other statutes, must be given a reasonable construction. It was not intended to provide a penalty for a failure to maintain cattle-guards, but compensation for the owner of stock injured in consequence of a failure on the part of a railroad company to take statutory precautions to prevent such injury. And a petition based upon this statute, which contains no allegation tracing or tending to trace the injury of the stock to a failure of the railroad company to take such precautions, is fatally defective. Such is the condition of the petition in this case, and the judgment based thereon is erroneous and should be reversed.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

JACKSON, C., concurs.

DUFFIE, C., not sitting

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

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CHARLES S. JOSLIN ET AL., TRUSTEES, V. DOBA E. WILLIAMS.\*

FILED MAY 8, 1906. No. 14,258.

1. **Receivers: DAMAGES.** In an action for damages growing out of the wrongful appointment of a receiver, the rental value of the property sequestered during the period of the receivership and the value of the services of counsel employed to procure the vacation of the order appointing the receiver are elements proper to be considered in determining the measure of damages.

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 602, *post*.

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2. ——: **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS.** The approval of the accounts of a receiver wrongfully appointed does not adjudicate the question of damages between the litigants in the action in which the receiver was appointed, where the party resisting such appointment and procuring a reversal of the order making the appointment does not participate in the accounting and receives no advantage therefrom.
3. ——: **DAMAGES.** The fact that the supreme court, in vacating an order appointing a receiver, puts its decision upon a ground different from the one urged by counsel does not deprive the party procuring the vacation of the order of the right to recover, in an action for damages, the value of the services of his attorney in procuring the judgment of vacation.

**ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: EDMUND M. BAETLETT, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*Hamilton & Maxwell*, for plaintiffs in error.

*B. N. Robertson*, contra.

**JACKSON, C.**

In July, 1901, Charles S. Joslin and Suviah Joslin, as trustees under the will of John J. Joslin, deceased, procured the appointment of a receiver in an action to foreclose a mortgage, wherein they were the plaintiffs and Dora E. Williams et al. were defendants. Upon appeal to the supreme court the order appointing the receiver was vacated and the petition for the appointment dismissed. *Joslin v. Williams*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 194. In that proceeding the Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland was surety on the bond of the applicants for the appointment. The receiver made report to the district court showing the collection of rents amounting to \$257.60, and disbursements to the amount of \$143.41, including his fees, and the remainder, by direction of the court, was paid over to the clerk subject to the order of Dora E. Williams, and that fund still remains in the custody of the court; and thereupon Dora E. Williams brought suit against the Joslins and their surety on the bond for

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damages because of the wrongful appointment of the receiver, and recovered judgment, from which error is prosecuted on behalf of the Joslins and their surety. In the discussion of the case the parties will hereafter be designated as they were designated in the court below.

The principal questions presented for determination in this court may be summarized, first, as to the effect of the order approving the report of the receiver and directing the disbursement of funds upon plaintiff's claim for damages by reason of the wrongful appointment; and, second, as to the measure of damages. It is urged on behalf of the defendants that the order confirming the report of the receiver and directing the disbursement of funds in his hands amounts to an adjudication of the rights of the plaintiff. This contention cannot be sustained, except upon the theory that the plaintiff was compelled to litigate in that action her right to the damages involved in this action; and it would seem that a bare statement of the proposition ought to be sufficient to dispose of that question. The accounts of the receiver are not involved, nor was there involved in the accounts of the receiver any question of damages which might arise by reason of his wrongful appointment. The appointment of a receiver adjusts and determines the right of no party to the proceedings, and grants no final relief, directly or indirectly. *Vila v. Grand Island E. L., I. & C. S. Co.*, 68 Neb. 233. The discharge of the receiver and the settlement of his accounts was a necessary result of the appointment, and was, of course, conclusive as between the parties litigant and the receiver himself, but did not have the effect of determining the question of damages as between the litigants, any more than the dissolution of an injunction or the discharge of an attachment would determine the question of damages in actions where relief by injunction or attachment is sought.

By section 269 of the code, it is provided that every order appointing a receiver shall require the applicant to give a good and sufficient bond, conditioned to pay all

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damages which the other parties to the suit, or any of them, may sustain by reason of the appointment of a receiver, in case it shall be finally decided that the order ought not to have been granted. This provision is similar in effect to those provisions of our code requiring bonds to be given in attachment proceedings and upon the procuring of temporary orders of injunction, and, while the liability on the bond follows as a result of the final judgment in such cases, the extent of such liability and the measure of damages remains to be determined in an independent action on the bond. That is equally true in cases of a bond given by the applicant for the appointment of a receiver. The case is not one where the appointment of a receiver was acquiesced in or agreed upon by the parties, or where it was finally determined that the appointment was justified. The appointment in this case was resisted at the outset, and the right to such appointment was contested at every stage of the proceedings; and, while the rights and liabilities of the receiver were determined upon the settlement of his account, the liabilities of the parties to each other, growing out of the appointment, were in no sense determined or adjudicated. Authorities are cited to the effect that the plaintiff should not be held responsible for losses which result from the wrongful acts or negligence of the receiver. They are not applicable, however, to this case, where the wrong does not arise out of the misconduct of the receiver. The damages here result from the wrongful appointment procured at the instance of the defendants Joslin.

At the trial the plaintiff was permitted to prove, over the objections of the defendants, the rental value of the premises during the period when the receiver collected the rents and profits, and the value of the services of counsel employed in her behalf in procuring the vacation of the order appointing the receiver. It is urged that the rental value of the premises was not a proper measure of damages under the allegations of the petition, and that attorney's fees in procuring the vacation of the order

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should not be considered as an element of damages. The petition contains a recital of the appointment of the receiver, a copy of the bond, the appeal to the supreme court and the order there made, the mandate of the supreme court requiring the district court to carry into effect the judgment of the supreme court, that the plaintiff was compelled to and did employ an attorney to prosecute the appeal to the supreme court, and the obligation to pay for the services so performed, together with the personal expenses of her attorney, which she was required to pay. It recites her title to the property and that she was entitled to the possession and the rents and profits; that the receiver entered upon the discharge of his duties, demanded and received the rents during the entire period of his receivership, and that he used and appropriated the rents and income arising therefrom; that the fair rental value of the premises was \$24 a month and that the receiver collected the sum of \$360 as such rents and profits. The contention that the rental value of the premises during the period of the receivership was not a proper measure of damages doubtless arises from the construction placed upon the allegation of the petition by the defendants. We have no hesitancy in saying that the rental value of the premises was a proper measure of damages, and that the allegation in the petition showing the amount of rents collected by the receiver is entirely immaterial. What the result would have been had the plaintiff accepted the remainder of the rents and profits paid into court by the receiver, or had the plaintiff procured or participated in the proceedings resulting in the statement of the receiver's account, it is unnecessary to determine; nor is it important to the inquiry that she might still apply to the clerk of the district court and receive the remainder from his hands. It is sufficient to state that she did not procure the accounting by the receiver and has not received any part of the funds collected by him; nor is it important that the defendants have permitted that fund to remain in the custody of the clerk.

There is no statute expressly authorizing the allowance of attorney's fees as an item of damages where it is finally determined that a receiver should not have been appointed. That is true, however, of every other element of damages. The statute does not undertake to define the damages which the applicant for the appointment of a receiver may be called upon to pay in the event that the receiver is improperly appointed. That is equally true in cases of the allowance of a temporary injunction and the attachment of property under the provisions of the code. It is now, however, the settled rule of this state that attorney's fees are properly allowable in such cases as an element of damages, and there seems to be no good reason why they should not be allowed in case of the wrongful appointment of a receiver. But it is said that this rule is a hardship on the defendants, as illustrated by the fact that the item of attorney's fees charged exceeds the entire amount of the rents and profits. Any other rule, however, would work a hardship on the plaintiff, whose property was sequestered and who was obliged to and did employ counsel in order that the wrong might be righted, and it should be the policy of the law, where hardship must be suffered by some one, to relieve the litigant who is free from wrong and to cast the onus upon the one out of whose wrongful acts the hardship arises.

Furthermore, it is insisted that in the appellate proceedings from the order appointing the receiver counsel for plaintiff presented the case upon the theory that the property was the homestead of the plaintiff, whereas the appellate court finally put the decision upon the ground that the plaintiff's right of possession was by reason of the provisions of section 17, ch. 36, Comp. St. 1901. That course of reasoning does not impress us with very much force. The fact remains that the plaintiff contended that the character of the property was such as to prohibit the appointment of a receiver. That contention was sustained in the appellate court, although upon a ground different from the one urged. That would not militate, however,

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against the plaintiff's demand for damages; the result was the same, notwithstanding the erroneous reason. In *Haverly v. Elliott*, 39 Neb. 201, an action on a bond given in a case where the receiver was wrongfully appointed, it is said:

"The law of the state, and the bond given by Haverly and his sureties as well, provided that if it should be finally decided that this receiver was wrongfully appointed, then that Haverly would pay Mrs. Elliott all damages which she might sustain by reason of the appointing of such receiver. The word 'all' does not mean some, nor a part, but means the whole, the entire damage, every item of injury."

The rule there stated is justified by the language of the statute, and, to say the least, is a common sense rule.

It is contended that the court erred in denying an offer on the part of the defendants to put in evidence the report of the receiver and the order of the district court thereon. In view of the conclusion already reached, however, we must hold that the objection to the introduction of this record was properly sustained.

In the answer of the defendants a counterclaim is set out for costs paid by the defendants in the foreclosure proceedings, which were adjudged against the plaintiff. It appears that upon the trial of the foreclosure proceedings on its merits the district court found for the defendants in that proceeding and dismissed the plaintiff's petition. Upon appeal to the supreme court that decree was reversed at the cost of the appellee, amounting to \$21. It was adjudged by the decree of foreclosure that, in default of the payment by the defendant of the amount found due on the mortgage, with interest and costs of suit (alleged to amount to \$127.71, including the item of \$21, costs in appellate court), the property should be sold as upon execution for the satisfaction thereof, and this, it is said, is a personal judgment against the plaintiff, which she has not satisfied, although the costs were paid out of the proceeds of the sale of the mortgaged property. No de-

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ficiency judgment, however, was or could be entered in the foreclosure proceedings, and, in our opinion, no execution could issue upon the judgment for costs, other than an order for the sale of the mortgaged premises.

In the instructions to the jury given by the court on its own motion, the court advised the jury as to the allegations of the petition and of certain admissions contained in the answer, but neglected to state that the answer contained a general denial. It is complained that the instruction is erroneous and prejudicial. That the instruction is open to criticism may be conceded. In view, however, of the other instructions to the jury, we do not think that the failure to call the attention of the jury to the general denial was prejudicial. The court instructed the jury that the burden of proof was on the plaintiff to establish the allegations of her petition by a preponderance of the evidence. This instruction was certainly as favorable to the defendants as the pleadings would justify, and necessarily had the same effect as a statement from the court that the allegations of the petition were denied. In instruction No. 3 the court said: "You are further instructed that the court did not permit evidence to be introduced in support of the cross-demand or other defense to said bond, alleged in the answer of said defendants, for the reason that, as a matter of law, said allegations in said answer are not a defense to this action upon this bond in controversy, and you will therefore not consider the same." This instruction is also open to criticism because of the use of the words "or other defense," but, in view of the state of the record, cannot be said to have been prejudicial. All of the rulings of the court in the matter of the introduction of evidence, to which our attention has been called, were proper; and all offers of evidence on behalf of the defendants which were excluded on objection were properly excluded, and no prejudice to the defendants could possibly arise out of the instructions complained of.

In defining the elements of damage for which the plaintiff was entitled to recover, they were stated thus by the

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court: "First. Of the injury to her possession during the time she was deprived of the occupation of said premises. Second. The actual and necessary expenses which she incurred in the employment of an attorney, if any, to resist said receivership, and of the natural and necessary expenses of said attorney in going to Lincoln to attend the supreme court in the matter of resisting said appointment of a receiver, and of the costs of court which she expended in said resistance to the appointment of said receiver." It is said that this instruction is erroneous, in that it submits to the jury the question as to the value of the services rendered by plaintiff's attorney to resist the receivership, whereas the allegations of the petition relative to the services of an attorney in the district court were stricken out on motion. The court, however, by another instruction, told the jury not to consider any services rendered by the attorney for plaintiff in the district court. In instruction No. 6 the court directed the jury to return a verdict for the plaintiff and assess her damages at such sum as they might find from the evidence, under the instructions, she was entitled to recover, not exceeding the penalty in the bond. This instruction was entirely proper. Under the pleadings and evidence no verdict could stand except one favorable to the plaintiff. All other objections to the instructions are disposed of in the previous discussion of the case.

We find no reversible error in the record, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

ALBERT, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed May 24, 1907. *Judgment of affirmance adhered to:*

1. Homestead: FORECLOSURE: RECEIVERSHIP, COST OF. The value of a mortgagor's homestead interest and right of possession of the

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mortgaged premises pending foreclosure proceedings cannot be diminished by the costs of a receivership, the fees of the receiver, or the money not necessarily paid out by him for repairs on the premises, where it has been finally decided that the receiver ought not to have been appointed.

2. **Receiver's Bond: Actions: Cross-Demand.** In an action on the bond given to obtain the appointment of the receiver, in such a case, defendants cannot by way of cross-demand recover the costs of the foreclosure proceeding for which the owner of the homestead interest was not personally liable.

BARNES, J.

This is an action on a bond given by the plaintiffs in a foreclosure suit to obtain an order appointing a receiver to take possession of the mortgaged premises, collect the rents and profits thereof pending the litigation, and apply them to the satisfaction of the mortgage debt. The plaintiff herein had judgment in the court below, which was affirmed by our former decision, *ante*, p. 594. The case has been reargued to the court on a rehearing, and the question now is, shall we adhere to our former judgment?

It appears that the bond in question was given under the provisions of section 269 of the code, and was conditioned: That the plaintiffs in that suit should pay to the defendant, plaintiff herein, all damages which she might sustain by reason of the appointment of the receiver, if it should be finally decided that the order ought not to have been granted. By the judgment of this court it was finally decided that the order should not have been made, and that branch of the foreclosure suit was dismissed and the proceeding wholly terminated. *Joslin v. Williams*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 194. It further appears that the plaintiff herein was the surviving mortgagor of the house and lot, the subject of the foreclosure suit, which was her homestead, and was therefore entitled to the undisturbed possession, use and enjoyment thereof until after sale and confirmation under decree of foreclosure; that the receiver took charge of the property over the plaintiff's objection, deprived her

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of the use and possession thereof, collected the rents and profits, which she was clearly entitled to receive, and which, but for such wrongful appointment, she would have received for her own use and benefit. That the plaintiff can maintain this action seems clear; so the only question for our determination is the proper measure of her damages.

It is contended by the defendants that the plaintiff is not entitled to recover the rental value of the premises in question during the time she was wrongfully deprived of her right to the possession thereof, for the reason that from the nature and character of the receivership proceedings the possession of the receiver was her possession; that he was her receiver, and not the representative of the plaintiffs in the foreclosure suit. In support of this contention counsel quote from *Wiswall v. Sampson*, 14 How. (U. S.) \*52, \*65, as follows:

"The effect of the appointment is not to oust any party of his right to the possession of the property, but merely to retain it for the benefit of the party who may ultimately appear to be entitled to it; and when the party entitled to the estate has been ascertained, the receiver will be considered his receiver."

An examination of the case from which the above quotation is taken shows that it was an action in ejectment. The plaintiff claimed title through an execution sale of the real estate in question based on a judgment at law; while the defendant claimed title through a sale made by a master in chancery in an action to set aside a conveyance of the real estate as fraudulent, and subject it to the payment of a judgment upon which an execution had been issued and returned unsatisfied. It appears that in the equity proceeding a receiver was appointed to take charge of the property after the rendition of a decree adjudging the conveyance fraudulent as to creditors and ordering that the property be subjected to the payment of the judgment or judgments in question. There was no contention that the receiver was not rightfully appointed, and the

excerpt relied on is only a part of the reasoning of the court to uphold its judgment. The thing actually decided in that case was that, where real estate is in the custody of a receiver appointed by a court of chancery, a sale of the property under execution issued by virtue of a judgment at law is illegal and void. And the proper proceeding to be pursued by any person claiming title to such property either by mortgage, judgment or otherwise was there pointed out. So it may be said that the decision does not support the defendants' contention.

Again, it would seem clear that before a receiver could be said to be the receiver of any party, especially of a party opposing his appointment at all stages of the proceedings, he must have been rightfully appointed. In the case at bar the plaintiff never acquiesced in the appointment of the receiver, but on the other hand protested against such appointment, and took the proper steps to reverse the order of the district court in that behalf. She was successful; and the rule invoked that the receiver who was wrongfully appointed must be accepted by her as her receiver is so absurd we cannot give it our approval. It seems to us that this case is ruled by *Haverly v. Elliott*, 39 Neb. 201. There the plaintiff owned and conducted a confectionery store, and manufactured and sold ice cream and soda water. She also owned a stock of confections and a miscellaneous lot of furniture and fixtures used in her business. One Haverly held a lien against this property and brought suit in equity to foreclose it. He obtained the appointment of a receiver, who took possession of the plaintiff's property and place of business, held them for some days, and then sold the property to pay the Haverly lien. It having been finally decided that the order appointing the receiver ought not to have been granted, the plaintiff sued Haverly and his sureties on the bond given to obtain the appointment of such receiver. We held that the value of her interest in the property sold by the receiver at the time he took possession of the same, and the actual loss she sustained by the suspen-

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sion of her business during the time she was prevented from carrying it on, by reason of the possession held by the receiver of her property and place of business, was the correct measure of damages. In the case at bar the plaintiff was entitled to the possession of her home until after sale and confirmation upon a decree of foreclosure. The defendants Joslin wrongfully obtained the appointment of a receiver and thus deprived her of her right of possession. The value of her possession was the fair rental value of the premises during the time they were held by the receiver. She was entitled to such rental value, and it could not lawfully be diminished by the costs and expenses of the receivership which, including his fees, he deducted from the amount of rent collected by him.

Again, a party could not lawfully be required in such a case as this to expend any of the money which she was entitled to receive as the rental value of the premises in improvements or repairs thereon of any kind. Of course, it might not be for her interest to make repairs on the property. Unless the debt was paid she was only entitled to the use and enjoyment of it until sale and confirmation, after which she would be required to surrender all her rights to the purchaser. She was not required to improve the property or to repair the same for the benefit of such purchaser; and this is especially so because of the fact that, whether the premises brought much or little at the sale, no deficiency judgment could have been rendered against her. So the amount of the receiver's fees and the costs of that proceeding, together with the money expended for repairs out of the rentals of the property, were wrongfully taken from her and converted to another's use. It is insisted, however, by counsel for the defendants that the approval of the account of the receiver, and his discharge by the order of the district court, was binding on the plaintiff to the extent, at least, of compelling her to receive the small remainder which he paid into court in full compensation for her interest in the mortgaged premises while she was wrongfully

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deprived of the use and benefit thereof. To so hold would amount to a reversal of our judgment in her favor declaring that the receiver was wrongfully appointed. When the order relied on was made there was no receiver in the foreclosure proceeding. Long before that time he had been discharged, and the judgment appointing him had been reversed and set aside. So it seems clear that the plaintiff was not bound by that order, but has the right to proceed against the defendants on the bond given by them to secure the appointment of the receiver, and recover all the damages that she has thereby sustained.

Lastly, the defendants contend that they were entitled to recover of the plaintiff the costs in the foreclosure proceeding, or a part of them, on their cross-demand in this case. It is urged as a reason for the contention that a large part of the costs in that proceeding was advanced by them, and that the court erred in denying them the right to recover the costs so advanced. This contention cannot be sustained. The decree of the district court in the foreclosure case provided that out of the proceeds of the sale of the mortgaged premises the costs should be first paid, and that the remainder of such proceeds should be applied to the payment of the amount found due the plaintiffs therein. So the plaintiff herein was not made personally liable for any part of the costs, and no personal judgment could have been rightfully rendered against her therefor. As we understand it, it is not now contended that she can be compelled to pay any part of the costs of the foreclosure proceedings by execution or otherwise, and we fail to understand how the value of her right of possession of the premises in question during the pendency of the foreclosure proceedings can be diminished by requiring her to pay any part of the costs of that action. We are asked, however, in case we adhere to our former decision, to make some order with reference to the disposition of the money deposited in court by the receiver, so that the plaintiff may not have double rent from the property in question. It would seem that this

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is a matter for the consideration of the district court; that if the defendants desire to have the money there deposited paid to the plaintiff they should make an application to that court for an order on the clerk to turn over the fund to the plaintiff as a payment *pro tanto* upon her judgment. Or, if they see fit to do so, they may obtain an order permitting them to withdraw the money for their own use and benefit, and in that event execution should be awarded to the plaintiff for the full amount of her judgment herein.

For the foregoing reasons, our former judgment is adhered to.

AFFIRMED.

SEDGWICK, C. J., dissenting.

The defendant in the foreclosure proceedings, who is now the plaintiff in this action, was entitled to the possession and use of the premises while the foreclosure proceedings were pending. Of this use and possession she was deprived by the appointment of a receiver. It was finally determined that the receiver ought not to have been appointed. The condition of the plaintiffs' bond given upon the appointment of the receiver has therefore been broken and the plaintiff is entitled to recover thereon. The question is as to the measure of damages.

When a court of competent jurisdiction, and with jurisdiction of the parties and to determine the necessity and propriety of a receivership, makes an order appointing a "receiver, the receiver so appointed is an officer of the court. He is such officer of the court not only in the ordinary sense, but also in a special and peculiar sense. The actions of the receiver are the actions of the court. He performs those actions under the general orders of the court, and they are as much the acts of the court as though there had been a special order for the performance of each individual act, so far as the receiver acts only within the scope of the order appointing him. When it is finally determined that the order appointing the

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receiver ought not to have been made, this is a determination that the court has made a mistake, and it cannot be true in any ordinary sense that either the court or the receiver is a trespasser. The statement therefore in the opinion in *Haverly v. Elliott* 39 Neb. 201, that the judgment of the court that the receiver was wrongfully appointed put the receiver in the position of a trespasser is not to be applied in a general sense. The meaning of the writer of that opinion must have been that, in that particular case, the rules for estimating damages applicable to trespassers who had converted property were also applicable to the case then being considered.

A court is not to be held to be a trespasser because of an error of judgment in exercising a lawful jurisdiction, and the officer of the court executing that order cannot, for the same reason, be held to be a trespasser. A receiver acting under the orders of the court made within its jurisdiction is generally considered to be the receiver for all parties to the litigation. If under the orders of the court he takes possession of property belonging to a party to the litigation, he holds that property under the orders of the court for the party to whom it belongs, to be delivered to that party when the rights of the parties are determined. And in this case, when this receiver under the orders of the court took possession of the property in controversy, the plaintiff in this case was at all times in legal right entitled to have that property returned to her by the receiver, and in that sense the receiver held the property for her and was her receiver. When it was determined that the receiver ought not to have been appointed this plaintiff was entitled to an order upon the receiver to return the property to her, and of course she was entitled to an order to return the proceeds of that property which had accrued while in the hands of the receiver; and so when the receiver held the rentals of this property, he held them for this plaintiff as her receiver, and, when he ceased to be receiver, ought to have returned these rentals to this plaintiff. This is all

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that the receiver could return to the plaintiff and was not sufficient to satisfy her just claim for damages. If the amount which the receiver held for her and returned into court to be paid to her was equal to all of the damages which she had sustained, she manifestly could not have recovered in this action; or, more correctly stated, so far as the receiver accounted for and paid over to her, or paid into court for her, the money equivalent of the use of the premises of which she had been deprived, she was not damaged by the appointment of the receiver. In other respects the measure of damages adopted by the trial court appears to be correct. She was deprived of the use of the premises to which she was entitled. She was therefore entitled to recover the value of such use, less the amount which the receiver accounted for to her. The claim of the defendants to offset against her the amount of costs which had been adjudged against the property in the foreclosure proceedings was correctly refused. In these foreclosure proceedings no deficiency judgment could have been rendered against this plaintiff, who was defendant there, and the judgment for costs was strictly a judgment against the property and was not a personal judgment against this plaintiff. The property was afterwards sold and the proceeds applied upon the mortgage claim. The costs accrued in the foreclosure proceedings were a part of the mortgage claim, and the proceeds were first applied in payment of these costs, and afterwards upon the indebtedness, and the remaining deficiency would not be a personal claim against the defendant in those proceedings.

The improvements made upon the property by the receiver ought not to be charged to this plaintiff. These improvements, no doubt, enhanced the value of the property and so benefited the defendants and not the plaintiff. The plaintiff does not get the property, but only the use thereof until the title passed to the defendants under the foreclosure sale. It is not claimed that the rental value during the time plaintiff was entitled to

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the same was increased by these improvements. Apparently the plaintiff was allowed to recover only the rental value of the property as it was when she was dispossessed by the receiver, and, if so, she was in nowise benefited by the improvements. It devolved upon the defendants to allege and show that the making of these improvements lessened the plaintiff's damages. This they have failed to do.

The costs paid out by the receiver ought not to be charged to this plaintiff. No doubt this plaintiff, and all other parties to the suit in which the receiver was appointed, are bound by the final adjustment of the receiver's accounts by the court. This settlement of the receiver's accounts shows that these costs were occasioned by the appointment of the receiver. The appointment was wrongful; and that unnecessary costs would be caused by this appointment, and this plaintiff damaged thereby, must have been within the contemplation of the principal and sureties on the bond in suit when the bond was given. If the plaintiff had paid these costs she could, of course, have recovered the amount on this bond. So far as the plaintiff has failed to get the value of the use of the premises that she would or might have received if no receiver had been appointed, she has been damaged by the appointment.

Under the judgment of the district court in this case, as affirmed by the majority opinion, the plaintiff recovers the full amount of the rental value of the property, and the money that is paid into court by the receiver goes to the defendants. If the law had been strictly observed upon the trial, the plaintiff would have been allowed to take the money paid into court by the receiver, and that amount would have been deducted from the damages she would otherwise have been allowed to recover. Possibly, this error might require a reversal of the judgment, and, if so, the costs of this court would fall upon the defendants, and they would be allowed a retrial of the plaintiff's claim of damages. Apparently the result would be sub-

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stantially the same, and, if so, no injury has been done the defendants. It may therefore be said that I dissent from the reasoning of the opinion and concur in the result.

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SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOUTH OMAHA V. LEONARD A. DAVIS.

FILED MAY 8, 1906. No. 14,293.

**Contract: CONSTRUCTION.** A contract will ordinarily be construed as it was understood and construed by the contracting parties.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county. LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*A. H. Murdock, Lambert & Cohn and A. O. Pancoast,* for plaintiff in error.

*T. J. Mahoney, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

On the 13th day of June, 1900, L. A. Davis, an architect, entered into a contract in writing with the school district of South Omaha, of which the following is a copy: "In Duplicate. Agreement. Whereas, at a regular meeting of the board of education of the school district of the city of South Omaha, Nebraska, held on the 4th day of June, 1900, L. A. Davis was duly elected architect for the said district for the period of one year, commencing June 27, 1900, and ending June 27, 1901, and, at a subsequent meeting of said board, the officers of said board were duly authorized for and in behalf of the said district to enter into a contract with the said L. A. Davis for the period of one year at a compensation for his services of 5 per cent. of the cost of the improvements in buildings or other erections, the construction of which, as such architect, he may supervise,

payments of which shall be made monthly as the improvements may progress. Now, therefore, it is agreed by and between the school district of South Omaha, Nebraska, and L. A. Davis that said school district does hereby employ said L. A. Davis as architect for it for the year commencing June 27, 1900, and ending June 27, 1901, at a compensation for his services of 5 per cent. of the cost of all the buildings or other erections which he, as such architect, may supervise the creation of, payable in monthly instalments, as the work progresses, on the first day of each month; and the said L. A. Davis agrees to draw all plans, specifications, and details for all buildings or alterations that the said board may require, and supervise all the said work during the said period, when authorized and directed so to do by a majority of the said board. And said L. A. Davis hereby accepts said position for the term above stated, and at the compensation above fixed, and agrees to perform the duties of architect for said district as above stated. In witness whereof, the parties hereto have set their hands this 13th day of June, 1900. The School District of the City of South Omaha, in the county of Douglas, in the state of Nebraska. J. H. Bulla, Pres't; Wm. Brennan, Sec'y. L. A. Davis."

He performed certain services, which it is agreed were within the terms of the contract, and received compensation amounting to the sum of \$1,000.

It appears that at the annual school meeting of that year the board of education were authorized to purchase a site for a high school building, with the view of erecting such a building in the near future. It was not contemplated that the building should be erected during the period covered by the contract with Davis, and in fact it was not erected during that period. At a meeting of the board of education held on November 19, 1900, the record discloses this proceeding: "Motion by Lochner and Miller that the architect, Mr. Davis, be hereby instructed to draw plans for a high school building to be

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erected on the lately purchased Hoctor site. Motion carried; seven members voting aye, Brennan and Roberts, no." At a meeting held on February 4, 1901, the record discloses that "Architect Davis submitted plans for a new high school. Motion by Lochner and Lott that the plans for a new high school presented by Mr. Davis be adopted. Motion carried; seven members voting aye; Brennan and Roberts, no." The board allowed and paid Mr. Davis \$1,900 in fees for the plans so adopted; and on August 6, 1903, the school district instituted this action in the district court to recover from Davis the amount of fees paid him for the plans, on the theory that the services performed were within the terms of the contract, and that, as the building was not erected during his term and the work not supervised by him, the money was improperly paid and the school district was entitled to recover. There are some allegations of fraud in the petition, which were denied in the answer, and at the trial no evidence was offered in support of such allegations. The answer pleaded a contract with the board independent of the one of June 13, 1900, the performance of the contract on his part, and payments thereon to the amount of \$1,900. The reply was a denial. At the close of the plaintiff's evidence, the court directed a verdict for the defendant, and the plaintiff appeals.

When the case was called for trial in the district court, plaintiff filed an affidavit for a continuance because of the absence of two witnesses. The affidavit set out in detail what facts it was expected to prove by the absent witnesses, and the absence of the principal counsel for the plaintiff was urged as another reason for the continuance. The defendant, however, admitted that the absent witnesses, if present, would testify to the facts as stated in the affidavit, and the application for continuance was denied. The record discloses that these affidavits were read in evidence, and that the counsel, on account of whose absence the continuance was asked, was present and participated at the trial. One of the absent witnesses

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was the secretary of the board of education, and it is urged with considerable force that his presence was especially important for the purpose of identifying records and papers at the trial; however, the defendant admitted the identity of all records and papers offered in evidence, and it does not appear that the plaintiff was in any manner prejudiced on account of the absence of witnesses.

The other reasons urged for a reversal of the judgment are that the services performed in preparing the plans were performed under the provisions of the contract of June 13, and that the defendant was not entitled to recover extra compensation therefor; and if they were not so performed, but were the result of an independent agreement, that such agreement was void because of the fact that the amount involved exceeded the sum of \$200 and the contract was not in writing; and, third, that no appropriation had been made to pay for the plans and the board of education was without authority to contract for them. It would be unreasonable to hold with the plaintiff on its first contention. So far as the record discloses, the entire compensation paid the defendant for the services performed within the terms of the contract of June 13, during the period of the contract, was the sum of \$1,000. If the construction contended for by the plaintiff were adopted, then the defendant might have been busily engaged on behalf of the plaintiff preparing plans and specifications during the entire period of the contract, without ever being entitled to compensation therefor, because it would be necessary that he should supervise the erection or repairing of the buildings themselves before he could receive compensation, and the compensation would then be based on the cost of the repairs or the new buildings. All that could be required of the architect under his contract for the year, in the matter of drawing plans and specifications, was that he should prepare plans and specifications of such repairs or new buildings as he would be called upon to supervise, and such as he would be entitled to compensation for. It

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is the duty of the court to construe the contract as it was understood and acted upon by the parties, and the record leaves no room for question that the parties themselves understood and acted upon the contract for the plans and specifications as an independent agreement.

As to the claim that the contract, if an independent one, is void under the statute, we think that the resolution of the board instructing Mr. Davis to prepare the plans, the presentation of the plans at a later date to the board and the record of the adoption of the same, and the approval and the allowance of bills are sufficient to bring the contract within the statute. The record discloses that at the close of the fiscal year within which the services were performed and paid for, there was a balance in the treasury of the district of \$9,318; there were ample funds available to pay for the plans, and it was entirely competent for the school board, as a preliminary step to the submission of the proposition for the erection of a high school building at the annual meeting in 1901, to prepare and submit plans and specifications for the proposed building. *Fiske v. School District*, 58 Neb. 163.

We find no error in the record, and recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

DUFFIE, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**HAZZARD P. STRYKER V. MICHAEL L. MEAGHER ET AL.**

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,297.

1. **Section Line: ACTION: INSTRUCTION.** In an action to establish a controverted section line, where the trial is conducted by both parties on the theory that the corner established by the government surveyors was not a lost corner, it is not error to charge

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the jury that they are to determine the location of the original boundary line, even though evidence was admitted that a corner had been established by the county surveyor who proceeded on the theory that the original corner was lost.

- 2. Adverse Possession: INSTRUCTION.** It is not error to charge the jury that the title to land becomes complete in the adverse occupant when he and his grantors have maintained an actual, continued, notorious and adverse possession thereof, claiming title to the same against all persons, for ten years.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

*H. M. Sinclair and E. A. Cook, for plaintiff in error.*

*Warrington & Stewart, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

The action arose out of a controversy over the boundary line between sections 15 and 22, in township 10 north of range 19 west, in Dawson county. The plaintiffs are the owners of the south half of section 15, and the defendant owns the north half of section 22. The controverted tract is triangular in form, it contains 45½ acres, and extends the entire length of the section line. The plaintiffs proceeded by ejectment. The defense was a plea of title and adverse possession. The finding of the jury and the judgment of the court were favorable to the plaintiffs' claim as to the true location of the section line, but favorable to defendant on his claim of adverse possession as to that part of the disputed tract lying west of the quarter section line extending north and south through section 15. The defendant prosecutes error, and urgently insists that the verdict and judgment are not supported by the evidence. A careful examination of the record has convinced us that the findings of the jury ought not to be disturbed in that respect. As usual in such cases many witnesses testified in behalf of either party. The testimony is direct and conflicting. It presented for determin-

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ation a question of fact purely within the province of the jury.

Complaint is made of instruction 5, wherein the court said: "You are instructed that the first question for you to decide in this case is the location of the original boundary line, established by the government between the respective tracts of land between the parties to this litigation." It is said that this instruction is erroneous because of the fact that a certain witness Beatty testified to having established a section corner for the northeast quarter of section 22, on the theory that the corner established by the government could not be found. The instruction was, without doubt, a correct statement of the law. The original corners and boundary lines established by the government surveyors are the true boundaries. Beatty was a civil engineer, without authority to change the location of such original boundary lines. Furthermore, the case was tried by both parties on the theory that none of the original corners were lost, and the instruction was in line with that theory.

Error is predicated upon the giving of instructions 10 and 12 of the charge. The complaint about these instructions arises out of the use of the word "title." In substance the charge is that adverse possession must be based upon a claim of title, and it is said that this in effect took from the jury all question of right arising under claim of adverse possession. The contention of counsel for plaintiffs in error is that there can be no title to real estate in this state except by some evidence in writing, as a deed or decree of court. Title is defined by Bouvier as "the means whereby the owner of lands hath the just possession of his property"; and he continues: "The lowest and most imperfect degree of title is \* \* \* the *mere possession*, or actual occupation of the estate, without any apparent right to hold or continue such possession; this happens when one man dispossesses another." By Webster it is defined as that which constitutes a just cause of exclusive possession, that which is the founda-

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tion of ownership of property, either real or personal. He also defines ownership as the state of being an owner, the right to own, exclusive right of possession, legal or just claim or title, proprietorship; so that claim of ownership, as used in our former adjudications, is synonymous with claim of title. In *Lantry v. Parker*, 37 Neb. 353, it was held that the operation of the statute of limitations is to vest absolute title in the occupant when he has maintained an actual, continued, notorious and adverse possession under claim of ownership for the statutory period, and the title so acquired may be made the basis of affirmative claim for relief, as well as it may be interposed as a defense, following former decisions of this court. This rule was adhered to in *Twohig v. Leamer*, 48 Neb. 247.

But, whatever merit there may be in the technical definition of title found in the brief of plaintiffs in error, the instruction was clearly without prejudice to the defendant and does not constitute reversible error, because under these instructions the jury found for the defendant on his claim of adverse possession as to that part of the disputed tract lying west of the quarter section line, and the character of the defendant's title to the northeast quarter of section 22 is the same as that of his title to the northwest quarter of that section, so that the jury was neither misled nor confused by the use of the word "title" as it is found in the instructions.

By instruction 15 the court instructed the jury as follows: "In conclusion you are instructed that, in determining the issue of fact in this case, you will take into consideration all the evidence bearing upon the respective questions. The evidence is not what counsel on either side stated to you in the opening statement they expected the testimony to show; nor what they have stated to you in the course of the argument, or to the court in your presence; nor is it what I may have stated to you or in your presence that my recollection of the testimony was. The opening statement is made to enable you to better understand the testimony as it is offered; the arguments are made to

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enable you in reaching a proper conclusion; the instructions of the court are to give you the law which will guide you in your deliberations; the evidence is what the witnesses have been permitted to say to you on the witness stand." The claim of error in this instruction is based upon the contention that the effect was to exclude from the consideration of the jury the testimony of certain witnesses contained in depositions read in evidence on behalf of the defendant, and all documentary evidence. The language employed by the trial court is incorrect and unfortunate, but the error does not seem to have influenced the jury. The objection, if well taken, would have excluded documentary evidence offered and received on behalf of the plaintiffs to establish their claim of title put in issue by a denial, and the finding of the jury could be supported upon no other theory than the one that documentary evidence was considered by them.

Upon the oral argument it was insisted by counsel for plaintiffs in error that the judgment does not correspond with the verdict of the jury, in that it gives to the plaintiffs a somewhat larger tract of land than they are entitled to under the verdict, and it was finally conceded by counsel for defendant that this objection was well taken, and for the purpose of correcting the judgment so that it may correspond with the verdict, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to enter judgment accordingly.

ALBERT, C., concurs.

DUFFIE, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to enter judgment conforming to the verdict of the jury.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

## MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA V. MAGGIE TALBOT.

FILED MAY 3, 1906. No. 14,304.

1. **Insurance Certificate: PROHIBITED OCCUPATIONS.** A life insurance certificate issued by a fraternal benefit society, which provides that if the member should engage in an occupation prohibited by the by-laws of the society the certificate should become *ipso facto* void as to any claim on account of the death of the member traceable to employment in such hazardous occupation, does not become void for all purposes in case the member engages in a prohibited occupation, but the society is exempted in such case from all liability on account of the death of the member by accident directly traceable to such prohibited employment, and the certificate remains in full force except as to the hazards of such occupation.
2. **Assessments: ESTOPPEL.** The society is not estopped from insisting upon its exemption from liability for the death of the member, due to his engaging in a prohibited occupation, by accepting his dues and assessments, with knowledge that he had entered upon such occupation.
3. ——. In such case the same consideration remained for the payment of dues and assessments as would have existed had the member not engaged in a hazardous and prohibited occupation.

ERROR to the district court for Polk county: **AETHUR J. EVANS, JUDGE.** *Reversed.*

**B. D. Smith and Talbot & Allen,** for plaintiff in error.

**E. E. Stanton,** contra.

**JACKSON, C.**

On January 24, 1900, the Modern Woodmen of America issued to Charles F. Talbot a benefit certificate containing a contract for life insurance payable to Maggie Talbot, mother of the insured. One of the conditions of the certificate was: "If said member shall enter upon or follow any of the employments or occupations mentioned in section 14 of the by-laws of this society now in force, or as hereafter amended, this certificate shall, so far as the same

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is intended to provide for the payment of benefits, become *ipso facto* null and void as to any claim growing out of or made on account of the death of said member by accident, directly traceable to employment in such hazardous occupation, or from any disease directly traceable thereto." Among the prohibited occupations mentioned in section 14 of the by-laws of the society is that of railroad brakeman on all trains, except passenger trains using air brakes only. Talbot died on the 7th day of June, 1903, and prior to his death had made payment of all dues and assessments maturing during his lifetime. His mother, as beneficiary, brought suit on the policy, and recovered judgment for the amount of insurance contracted for, with interest and costs, and the society has instituted this proceeding to reverse the judgment so obtained.

The defense interposed by the society is that the insured came to his death by accident while employed as brakeman on a construction train, and that his death was directly traceable to such employment. The case was tried upon a stipulation of facts, from which it appears that at the time the certificate was issued the insured was employed as a common laborer; that he came to his death at Promontory Point, Utah, on the line of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company, by being crushed between the bumpers of two freight cars which he was attempting to couple, and that he was at that time engaged in performing his duties as a railway brakeman on a construction train; that his death was directly traceable to his employment as such brakeman, and the fact that he was so employed was known to the clerk of the camp to which the insured belonged, and while so employed the clerk, knowing the character of his employment, accepted from the insured dues and assessments payable under the provisions of the policy. The correctness of the judgment depends upon the construction to be placed upon the contract of insurance. As we view the contract, it did not become void by reason of the insured being engaged in the prohibited employment. It was in full force and effect as to all risk which the society

assumed by its contract of insurance, and had the insured met his death while so engaged, on account of any cause within the terms of the contract, the contract would have been enforceable, notwithstanding his employment as a railway brakeman, but the death of the insured on account of any cause directly traceable to a prohibited employment is one of the risks not assumed by the society. There is in this case no question of waiver by reason of the acceptance of dues and assessments by the society, the same consideration remained for the payment of dues and assessments as would have existed had the insured not engaged in a hazardous and prohibited employment. *Abell v. Modern Woodmen of America*, 96 Minn. 494, 105 N. W. 65.

The case does not fall within the rule of *Modern Woodmen of America v. Lane*, 62 Neb. 89, or *Modern Woodmen of America v. Colman*, 64 Neb. 162. In the former case the rules of the society required a member to be in good standing in order to change the beneficiary by surrender of certificate and the issuance of a new one. It was held that, where the representative of a mutual benefit insurance company, within the scope of his authority, accepts a surrender of a benefit certificate and a fee for the issuance of a new one, with knowledge that the holder of the certificate is in arrears for dues or assessments, it was a recognition of the continued validity of the certificate, and was a waiver of the forfeiture as a matter of law. In the latter case the policy contained the provision: "If, after a person has become a member of this fraternity, he engages in any of the employments or occupations enumerated in section A, division 1, of the fundamental laws, his certificate thereupon shall be forfeited by such act, and the same shall be null and void. *Provided, however*, that a neighbor may, after becoming such member, without invalidating his certificate, be employed as railway brakeman, engineer, fireman \* \* \* if he shall, before entering upon any of the above mentioned occupations, file with the head clerk a written waiver of any liability of this

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order under his certificate of membership, for loss or death as the direct result of his being engaged in such prohibited occupation." Fireman on a locomotive was one of the prohibited employments. The deceased in that case was run over and killed by an engine on which he was employed as fireman, and during the time that he was so employed the camp clerk, knowing the character of his employment, accepted assessments and dues as they matured, without requiring the waiver of liability provided for by the contract, and it was held that the acceptance of the assessments and dues amounted to a waiver on the part of the association. There, however, it will be observed, the provision for a forfeiture was absolute and covered loss by death from any cause, and while the association, with knowledge of the facts constituting the forfeiture, might properly have declined to receive payment of dues and assessments, it continued to receive payment, and by so doing created an estoppel to deny liability. Contracts similar in effect to the one in suit are uniformly held to be legal and binding upon the parties who choose to enter into them, and in the absence of facts constituting waiver or estoppel are always enforced. The limitations as to prohibited employment established by the terms of the contract are legitimate and proper for the protection of all members of the association, and should in all proper cases be enforced.

Under the admitted facts, the judgment of the district court should be reversed and the cause remanded. We so recommend.

ALBERT, C., concurs.

DUFFIE, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

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St. James Orphan Asylum v. McDonald.

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**ST. JAMES ORPHAN ASYLU M ET AL. V. CHARLES G. MC DONALD, ADMINISTRATOR.\***

FILED MAY 8, 1906. No. 14,315.

**Decedent's Estate: ATTORNEY'S FEE.** A decedent's estate is properly chargeable with fees paid to counsel for services rendered in successfully defending the will against attack, and this rule ordinarily should not be departed from in a case where the contest is instituted by the person named in the will as executor, and the defense is conducted by counsel employed on behalf of a legatee.

**ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WILLIAM A. REDICK, JUDGE. Reversed.**

**Smyth & Smith and John C. Cowin, for plaintiffs in error.**

**McDonald & Woodland and Henry P. Stoddart, contra.**

**JACKSON, C.**

The plaintiffs in error made a claim against the estate of Joseph Creighton, deceased, for attorney's fees on account of services performed by them in litigation arising out of a contest of Mr. Creighton's will. Their claim was rejected in the county court and an appeal taken to the district court, where their petition was dismissed on general demurrer. From the judgment of the district court dismissing their petition they prosecute error.

Briefly stated the cause of action set out in the petition is: That Joseph Creighton died on October 16, 1893, leaving a will. Mary B. Shelby, a daughter, was his only heir at law and was named as executrix. By the terms of the will property to the value of \$50,000 was devised to the children of Mrs. Shelby, subject to a charge of \$15 a week for the support of the testator's sister-in-law, and property to the value of \$150,000 was devised to the Right Reverend James O'Connor, Roman Catholic bishop of Omaha, in trust for such charity as he might designate, an orphanage preferred, and in the event that the testator

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 630, *post*.

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should survive Bishop O'Connor, the property devised to him in trust should go to his successor as bishop of Omaha; the property so devised was substantially all of his estate. Bishop O'Connor died during the lifetime of Mr. Creighton and was succeeded by Right Reverend Richard Scannell. Mrs. Shelby refused to accept the trust of executrix under the will. Bishop Scannell conveyed the trust property left to him under the terms of the will to the St. James Orphan Asylum. Bishop Scannell, in conjunction with the orphan asylum, submitted Mr. Creighton's will to the county court for probate, and in that behalf employed the plaintiff Smyth as an attorney to conduct the probate proceedings. Mrs. Shelby contested the will and was successful in the county court, an appeal was taken to the district court, where after three separate trials she was again successful, and the case was then appealed to the supreme court, where the judgment of the district court was reversed and the cause remanded. Another trial resulted in a verdict favorable to the validity of the will, which upon appeal to the supreme court was affirmed. In the meantime Mrs. Shelby had been appointed administratrix of her father's estate, and conducted the administration thereof until the validity of the will was established and it was finally admitted to probate, when Richard S. Berlin was appointed administrator with the will annexed. A controversy over the settlement of the accounts of Mrs. Shelby as administratrix resulted in further litigation, conducted, as the petition alleges, on behalf of the orphan asylum by Mr. Smyth, assisted by Mr. Cowin who became associated as counsel after the appeal to the district court from the order of the county court refusing to admit the will to probate. This litigation resulted in a judgment against Mrs. Shelby for something over \$5,000, which was paid. Mr. Berlin died, and Chas. G. McDonald succeeded him as administrator. A guardian *ad litem* was appointed in the probate proceedings for the beneficiaries under the will who were minors. He filed an answer in behalf of his wards and procured one

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expert witness to testify in support of the will. No other service was performed by him. The litigation extended over a period of several years, and Messrs. Smyth and Cowin were required to devote a large amount of time in the preparation and conduct thereof. The beneficiaries and Messrs. Berlin and McDonald, as administrators, accepted the benefits of the litigation and adopted the services of the plaintiffs in that behalf.

No question is raised as to the sufficiency of the petition, if, as a matter of law, it is within the power of the court to require the payment of fees to counsel for the successful litigant out of the funds belonging to the estate. The matter of allowing costs and attorney's fees to an unsuccessful litigant in a proceeding to contest a will has several times been before the court. In *Mathis v. Pitman*, 32 Neb. 191, an order of the district court taxing costs against the estate was affirmed. In *Seebrock v. Fedawa*, 33 Neb. 413, costs and fees of counsel for the unsuccessful contestant were both allowed as a charge against the estate. In *Wallace v. Sheldon*, 56 Neb. 55, *Mathis v. Pitman* and *Seebrock v. Fedawa, supra*, were expressly overruled, and it was held that the courts are not invested with the discretion to award costs and attorney's fees to an unsuccessful contestant of a will, solely for the reason that he undertook the contest in good faith, Mr. Justice NORVAL dissenting. In *Atkinson v. May's Estate*, 57 Neb. 137, the court followed its holding in *Wallace v. Sheldon, supra*, and it was there broadly stated that "the estate of a decedent is not liable to an attorney for services rendered by him for and at the request of a legatee under decedent's will in a contest thereof." In that case, like all others determined in this court, the question was one of the allowance to the unsuccessful litigant, and we do not regard it as so conclusive of the case, where the question involved is the allowance of attorney's fees to the successful litigant, as to preclude further investigation. We do not doubt the power of the court to allow attorney's fees out of the estate of a decedent in proper cases involving the

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contest of a will. Had some one other than Mary B. Shelby instituted the contest proceedings, and she, as executrix, had employed counsel to defend the will and succeeded in the conduct of the defense to the extent of securing the will to be admitted to probate, the fees of her counsel would be a proper charge against the estate. *McIntire v. McIntire*, 192 U. S. 116.

It is urged in behalf of the plaintiffs in error that their position is the same as though they had been employed by the executrix to defend the will. This claim has considerable merit. In the case of *McIntire v. McIntire, supra*, speaking of the item of attorney's fees, it is said:

"On the allowance of the account it was charged against the estate. We are of opinion that the charge was proper. There is no contest over the amount. It was the proper business and duty of the administrator to defend the will, and he was entitled to a reasonable allowance for what he had to pay in doing so. The only just alternative would be to charge counsel fees as costs against the losing party, which would have been less favorable to the appellant. The general proposition is not disputed, but it is said that in this case the legatees retained the counsel and therefore ought to pay them. The other legatees as well as the administrator no doubt had a share in calling the counsel in. But that did not matter. The services were services to the estate in maintaining the testator's will, they were adopted by the administrator, and the usual rule must prevail."

The services performed by counsel in resisting the contest of the will, and the results obtained, were the same as they would have been had they been performed at the solicitation of the executor. The estate of Joseph Creighton was left in trust for certain purposes, and it is a general principle that a trust estate must bear the expenses of its administration. *Stone v. Omaha Fire Ins. Co.*, 61 Neb. 834. In that case counsel was consulted and finally employed to secure the appointment of a receiver for an insolvent corporation. A receiver was appointed, who

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afterwards retained the services of the same counsel, and it was held that he was entitled to compensation out of the trust fund, not only for his services as attorney for the receiver, but for services performed by him in consultation and securing the appointment of the receiver. The case was determined upon the broad principle that, where one of many parties having a common interest in a trust fund, at his own expense, takes proper proceedings to save it from destruction and to restore it to the purposes of the trust, he is entitled to reimbursement either out of the fund itself or by proportionate contributions from those who accept the benefit of his efforts. Mr. Commissioner SEDGWICK, the present chief justice of this court who wrote the opinion in that case, cited the cases of *Mathis v. Pitman* and *Seebrock v. Fedawa, supra*, as sustaining the general proposition, recognizing the similarity of principle involved in those cases with the one then in hand. The case presented by the petition is one, in our judgment, that requires an equitable apportionment of the costs and attorney's fees. In the brief of defendant is contained a recital of certain facts, outside the record of course, but worthy of notice in view of our conclusion that the judgment of the district court must be reversed. They relate to the depleted condition of the specific devise to the children of Mrs. Shelby, owing to the expensive litigation in which the estate has been involved, including compensation to counsel other than plaintiffs' and it may be that when all the facts are fully disclosed it would be found inequitable to compel a contribution on the part of the minor litigants. These, however, are matters proper for consideration upon an investigation into the merits. The case before us is determined upon the record as it stands, and we are agreed that upon that record the judgment of the district court should be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings. We so recommend.

**ALBERT, C., concurs.**

**DUFFIE, C., not sitting.**

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed January 5, 1907. *Former judgment vacated and judgment of district court affirmed:*

1. **Decedent's Estate: ATTORNEY'S FEE.** The estate of a decedent is not ordinarily liable to an attorney for services rendered by him for and at the request of a legatee under decedent's will, in a contest thereof. *Atkinson v. May's Estate*, 57 Neb. 137.
2. **Former opinion, ante, p. 625, overruled.**

BARNES, J.

This case is now before us on a rehearing. Our former opinion will be found *ante*, p. 625, where the facts involved in this controversy are stated. By referring to that statement it appears that by the will of the late Joseph Creighton about three-fourths of his large estate was given to one Bishop O'Connor, and his successors, in trust, to establish or endow an orphanage; that by a conveyance or assignment made by one Bishop Scannell, who was the successor of Bishop O'Connor, said legacy was given to the St. James Orphan Asylum. By the terms of the will the daughter of the deceased, Mary B. Shelby, who was his only heir-at-law, was disinherited, and the remainder of the estate was given to her children. She was named as executrix of the will, but refused to act in that capacity and declined to have the will probated. The St. James Orphan Asylum presented the will for probate. Mrs. Shelby contested, and was successful in the county court. After much litigation, however, the will was finally admitted to probate, and one Richard Berlin became the administrator thereof, but was later on succeeded by one Charles G. McDonald. The St. James Orphan Asylum

employed Mr. Smyth of the Omaha bar as its attorney to establish the will, and secure for it the legacy mentioned therein. During the pendency of the proceedings Mr. Cowin was employed to assist Mr. Smyth in conducting the litigation, at the conclusion of which they filed their claim in the county court of Douglas county, asking for an allowance of \$7,000 as counsel fees, and that the same be made a charge against the estate. The claim was resisted by the administrator, and was disallowed by the county court. An appeal was taken to the district court, where a demurrer to the claimants' petition was sustained and their action witnessed. They thereupon brought the action, by appeal, to this court, and in our former opinion it was held that "a decedent's estate is properly chargeable with fees paid to counsel for services rendered in successfully defending the will against attack, and this rule ordinarily should not be departed from in a case where the contest is instituted by the person named in the will as executor, and the defense is conducted by counsel employed on behalf of a legatee." This holding seems to have been based on the decision in *McIntire v. McIntire*, 192 U. S. 116, 48 L. ed. 369. A careful examination of that case inclines us to the belief that the learned commissioner who wrote our former opinion misapprehended the nature and scope of that decision. What was really held therein was that a decedent's estate is properly charged with counsel fees paid to counsel for services rendered for an administrator with the will annexed in defending the will against attack, although certain of the legatees, as well as the administrator, had a share in calling in such counsel. That this rule should not be applied to a case where the services were not rendered for the administrator and legatees jointly seems clear. In the case at bar the services were rendered for and at the instance and request of the principal legatee under the will and against the executrix named therein, who refused to accept the trust, and contested the validity of the will. It is true that in the case of *Mathis v. Pitman*, 32 Neb. 191, and in *Seebrock v. Fedawa*,

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*St. James Orphan Asylum v. McDonald.*

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33 Neb. 413, 29 Am. St. Rep. 488, counsel fees for the unsuccessful contestant were allowed as a charge against the estate. But in *Wallace v. Sheldon*, 56 Neb. 55, both of those decisions were expressly overruled, and it was held that the courts are not invested with the discretion to award attorneys' fees to an unsuccessful contestant of a will solely for the reason that he undertook the contest in good faith. Later on, in *Atkinson v. May's Estate*, 57 Neb. 137, it was broadly stated that "the estate of a decedent is not liable to an attorney for services rendered by him for, and at the request of a legatee under decedent's will in a contest thereof." And this has become the settled law of this state on that question. Not only is this the better rule, but it is supported by the great weight of authority in this country. In *In re Donges's Estate*, 103 Wis. 497, it was held that in a proceeding for the construction of a will counsel fees, except those of an executor, are not taxable as costs against the estate. And it was said in the opinion:

"In suits for construction of wills it is proper for the executor, whether plaintiff or defendant, to employ counsel to the end that the questions of law involved may be properly brought before the court. Whether he should employ counsel to present in the spirit of advocacy one or other or both of the antagonistic interests which may be involved by the construction, will often be a question of difficulty. Too often the counsel employed by the executors are in practical effect the ardent advocates of one side of a controversy between individual interests, in which the executor, as such, should have no choice. Obviously, such advocacy should not be compensated out of the common fund if its opposition is not to be also, and courts should be cautious in allowing for services ostensibly rendered to executors, but in spirit and effect rendered to one of the opposing interests, which should bear its own expenses. The field of discretion in controlling and approving conduct of executors and trustees is a broad one, however, and the court in each case must be guided by the

conditions and circumstances there present. In the case at bar, in this court at least, the services of counsel on both sides have been rendered, not to the executors, but to the respective claimants upon this estate, who should each bear the expense therefor which he has incurred."

It must be conceded that there is no statutory authority in this state for the allowance of the claim in question against the estate. But it is argued that the court in the exercise of its general equity powers may treat the estate as a trust fund and make such allowance. This contention was denied in *Estate of Cole*, 102 Wis. 1, where the following cases were cited as a basis for that opinion: *Rose v. Rose Beneficent Ass'n*, 28 N. Y. 184; *Dourning v. Marshall*, 37 N. Y. 380; *Devin v. Patchin*, 26 N. Y. 441; *Lee v. Lee*, 39 Barb. (N. Y.) 172. Indeed, it seems settled by the weight of authority that the allowances which can properly be made against the estate in such cases are counsel fees for the executor, and the claim for what is known as taxable costs, or in other words, the statutory fees incurred in the litigation. It seems to us that the rule announced in *Atkinson v. May's Estate*, *supra*, is not only supported by the great weight of authority, but is a most just and equitable one. In the case at bar Mrs. Shelby certainly was not benefited by the establishment of the will of her deceased father. If she had succeeded in defeating it, or if there had been no will at all, she would have inherited the whole of the estate, and her children, at her decease, probably would have received it, less the portion expended during her lifetime. So it seems clear that the proponent of the will, the St. James Orphan Asylum, was the party most beneficially interested in establishing its validity and having it probated. Through the efforts of the claimants herein, it succeeded in obtaining the legacy in question, which was, as before stated, about three-fourths of the whole estate. To tax the balance of the estate with the payment of counsel employed by the proponent, or with any portion thereof, would seem to be unjust and inequitable, and in direct opposition to the rule announced in

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the case last above mentioned. So we are of the opinion that the claim in question should not be made a charge upon the estate, but that the St. James Orphan Asylum, the party benefited by the services rendered by counsel, should be required to pay such claim out of the legacy which it secured through the efforts of its attorneys. This evidently was the view of the matter entertained by the district court and this meets with our approval.

For the foregoing reasons, our former judgment is vacated and the judgment of the district court is hereby affirmed.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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**MICHIGAN TRUST COMPANY, EXECUTOR, APPELLANT, V.  
CITY OF RED CLOUD ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED MAY 8, 1906. No. 14,474.

1. **Trusts: Suit to Enforce: Joinder.** Where different persons convey their property in trust for the purpose of securing the same debt, it is not a misjoinder of causes of action to unite them all as parties in a single action for the purpose of enforcing the conditions of the trust.
2. **Limitation of Actions.** A debtor in an action instituted in his own behalf is not entitled to appeal to the statute of limitations, in an action to relieve his property from a trust relation, in the absence of fraud, unless it appears that the conditions of the trust have been performed.

**APPEAL from the district court for Webster county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*Tibbets, Morey & Fuller*, for appellant.

*Bernard McNeny, J. R. Mercer and John O. Yeiser, contra.*

## JACKSON, C.

It is not our purpose to enter into an extended statement of the facts and circumstances involved in this controversy. They are detailed at length in former opinions of this court. *Michigan Trust Co. v. City of Red Cloud*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 722; 69 Neb. 585. Briefly stated, in 1893, the Farmers & Merchants Banking Company, located at Red Cloud, closed its doors, and for the purpose of liquidating its indebtedness entered into an agreement with the creditors for one year's time with which to meet their demands. Certificates of indebtedness were issued, payment of which was guaranteed by certain of the officers and stockholders other than John W. Moon. The persons who thus pledged their personal credit conveyed in trust real estate owned by them to secure payment. John W. Moon, who owned \$10,000 of the stock of the bank, resided in the state of Michigan. He owned real estate in Red Cloud, and, joining with his wife, conveyed this real estate in trust as further security for the payment of the bank's indebtedness. C. W. Kaley was named as trustee, the trust deeds were placed in the hands of Charles Weiner to be delivered to Kaley, who refused to accept the trust, Weiner removed from Red Cloud, and the deeds fell into the possession of Isidore Freymark. By the terms of the trust the property of the bank was to be first sold, and the proceeds applied to the payment of the debts of the bank; second, the property of those officers and stockholders other than Moon, and lastly, if a deficiency existed, Moon's property was to be sold and the proceeds, not exceeding the sum of \$10,000, applied to the satisfaction of the debts of the bank. The City of Red Cloud was a creditor, a portion of its claim has never been paid, the unpaid balance was reduced to judgment against the bank in January, 1898, execution was issued thereon and returned unsatisfied for want of property upon which to levy. Thereupon Moon commenced an action in the district court against Isidore Freymark for the surrender and cancellation of the deed.

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The City of Red Cloud intervened in that action for the purpose of resisting the surrender and cancellation of the deed and having the trust property sold and applied to the satisfaction of its judgment. At the same time it instituted an independent action seeking the same relief. In the meantime Moon died, and the Michigan Trust Company, as executor of his estate, was substituted as a party to the action. The two cases were consolidated, and all of the issues involved are presented in the consolidated action. A former decree was reversed in this court, and before the second trial, agreeably to the suggestion in our opinion, 69 Neb. 585, additional parties were brought into the case, viz., those claiming to own the title to real estate formerly owned by the bank, and those representing the trust property conveyed by the officers and stockholders of the bank other than Moon. The second trial has resulted in a decree favorable to the city of Red Cloud, and the Michigan Trust Company, as executor of Moon's estate, and Robert and Mary Damerell, who claim title to the trust property conveyed by Moon, appeal.

The decree involves property formerly owned by the bank and the trust property conveyed by the officers and stockholders, including Moon, and, following the terms of the contract, directs that the property involved shall be sold in the following order: First, the property of the bank; second, the trust property conveyed by the officers and stockholders of the bank other than Moon; and lastly, if a deficiency remain, the trust property conveyed by Moon, and the proceeds applied to satisfy the demand of the city of Red Cloud. The questions involved in the appeal of the trust company are a misjoinder of causes of action, a defect of parties, the statute of limitation, laches, and the pendency of another action for the collection of the debt. Many assignments are made, but we think all are included under those headings.

The first two will be disposed of together. It is said there are several independent and distinct causes of action set out in the bill on behalf of the city, because the city

seeks in this action to foreclose its lien on property owned by the bank, the separate property of stockholders of the bank other than Moon, as well as property belonging to Moon's estate. There are two reasons why this contention should not be sustained. When Moon instituted the action to procure the cancellation and surrender of the trust deed executed by him, the city was forced to take action in order to preserve its security. It did so, both by intervention and independent action, the proceeding was equitable in its nature, and the court having acquired jurisdiction should retain it for all purposes. Furthermore, all of the property involved was pledged to secure the claim of the city, the trust created should be enforced according to its terms, and in order to do so it was quite necessary that all of the trust property should be before the court. This was clearly pointed out in our opinion, 69 Neb. 585.

As to the plea of the statute of limitations, it appears that the present proceedings were instituted less than two years after the judgment at law was obtained, besides this action was originally instituted by Moon to relieve his property from the terms of the trust. That the indebtedness of the bank to the city remains in part unpaid is beyond controversy, and equity will not relieve his property at his instance from the lien voluntarily created, unless it appears that he has fulfilled his obligation by payment of the debt. The doctrine of laches as applied to the facts in this case was fully discussed and disposed of in 3 Neb. (Unof.) 722, and has become the law of the case.

It is disclosed by the record that at the time the amended bill was filed the city of Red Cloud had instituted proceedings to subject certain property formerly belonging to the bank to the payment of its judgment against the bank, and that action was pending at the time the amended bill was filed, and it is alleged that such proceeding was an action at law within the meaning of the statute, and was a bar to the present proceeding. In view

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of the conclusion already reached this contention is without merit. The property of the bank was involved in the trust agreement, and in an action to enforce the performance of a trust each and every item involved therein became a proper subject matter to be dealt with by the court, and the entire matter might be properly disposed of in one action. The issues involved were by the amended petition ingrafted into this action, and we think properly.

But it is said that one of the conditions attached to the delivery of the trust deed by Moon is that his property should not be sold until after all the property belonging to the bank and its resident stockholders, and that the evidence discloses that such property has not been sold. That provision of the contract has been observed and safeguarded by the decree. Again it is said that the guarantee by John W. Moon is void under the statute of frauds, the contract being to answer for the debt or default of another, and that it is not in writing. In connection with this contention it is urged that the finding by the court that Moon was a stockholder in the Farmers & Merchants Banking Company to the amount of \$10,000 is unsupported by the evidence. The record contains an admission that Moon was a stockholder in the bank, evidence of his declaration that he had secured the depositors to the full extent of his liability as a stockholder, and the direct evidence of George O. Yeiser that Moon had stock in the bank to the extent of \$10,000. It is evident to the writer that the purpose of Moon was to secure the depositors to the extent of his statutory liability as a stockholder, although a different conclusion seems to have been reached in 69 Neb. 585. Upon either theory, however, the statute of frauds cannot be held to apply.

Upon the appeal of the Damerells we think the finding of the trial court that they are not innocent purchasers of the Moon property is amply supported by the evidence. The bill of exceptions in this case contains 621 pages, considerable of that space is devoted to the recording of objections and exceptions necessary, perhaps, to preserve for the consider-

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ation of this court the questions involved. This is the fourth time the case has been the occasion of consideration in this court, and there should somewhere be an end of the litigation. In our judgment every issue has been fully and fairly met by the trial court, and rightfully determined under the law and the facts.

We recommend that the decree be affirmed.

**ALBERT, C.**, concurs.

**By the Court:** For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**IN RE WILLIAM A. SIMMONS.**

**FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,472.**

**Inebriates: COMMITMENT: PROCEDURE.** The statute providing for the commitment of inebriates to the state hospital for the insane requires that an application "in the nature of an information" be filed with the commissioners of insanity, alleging that the person in whose behalf the application is made is a dipsomaniac or inebriate and a fit subject for treatment in the hospital. There must be a hearing upon the information, and a finding by the commissioners that the information is true. A commitment without such information and finding is void.

**ORIGINAL application for a writ of habeas corpus. Writ allowed.**

**Allen G. Fisher**, for relator.

**Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson,**  
**contra.**

**SEDGWICK, C. J.**

This is an application to this court, in its original jurisdiction, for a writ of habeas corpus. The respondent,

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Dr. James L. Greene, is superintendent of the hospital for the insane at Lincoln, Nebraska. In his petition the relator alleges that he is restrained of his liberty by the respondent "upon the charge that he was a person who by reason of his habits relative to the use of intoxicating liquors came within the inhibition of an act of the legislature of Nebraska enacted, signed and approved on April 4, 1905, whereby are conferred powers in relation to dipsomaniacs, etc., \* \* \* and that he is now deprived of his liberty unlawfully by Dr. J. L. Greene, superintendent of the said hospital." The respondent filed a general demurrer to the petition of the relator. With the petition there was filed a paper purporting to be the return of a physician to the commissioners of insanity of Dawes county and the record of the proceedings of the commissioners therein; and attached to the demurrer is a paper purporting to be a copy of a commitment to the hospital for the insane. This paper is executed by C. L. Freeman, who signs himself as clerk, and shows that a seal was attached to the original. These papers were referred to by both parties in their briefs and also upon the argument, and will therefore be treated as a part of the showing in the case. From the paper which purports to give the proceedings of the commissioners of insanity of Dawes county, it appears that the commissioners examined four or five witnesses who testified "that they knew him (the relator) to be an habitual excessive user of alcoholic stimulants, and that they believed it was impossible for him to control the appetite for intoxicants. Not only they, but each member of the board has been personally acquainted with the patient for several years, knows that it is practically impossible for him to come to town without getting drunk and that he is a public nuisance when he is drunk." Then follows a statement that "it is admitted by the defense that the above facts could be established by a great number of witnesses." The record then states: "The board finds him a fit subject for treatment for the liquor habit at the state hospital for the in-

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sane, and imposes a sentence of two years." In the paper, which purports to be the clerk's warrant of commitment, it is said "that the said commissioners find William A. Simmons to be an inebriate, and a fit subject for custody and treatment in the hospital."

It is urged that this statement in the commitment ought to be taken as establishing an additional finding of the commissioners, but we think that it cannot be so regarded. The statute under which the proceedings were brought provides: "Applications for admission of such persons to the hospital must be made in writing in the nature of an information, verified by affidavit; such information must allege that the person in whose behalf the application is made is believed by the informant to be a dipsomaniac or inebriate or addicted to the excessive use of morphine, cocaine or other narcotic drugs and a fit subject for treatment in the hospital." Comp. St. 1905, ch. 40, sec. 64. And in section 66 it is provided: "If, upon the investigation, the commissioners shall find the information to be true, they shall impose upon the person in whose behalf the application is made, a sentence of detention in the hospital until the patient is cured, and not exceeding three years." It is also provided (section 65): "The commissioners shall hear testimony for and against such application, and the parties may be represented by counsel upon the hearing." From these provisions of the statute it appears that, when a citizen is charged with being a dipsomaniac or an inebriate, there must be a trial and findings of fact, and there must be, of course, a record of this trial and of these findings, and this record must be kept with sufficient formality to show the jurisdiction of the commissioners in the premises, and also to show the action that was taken by the commissioners upon the complaint. In order to justify the commitment of the person charged, this record must show that from the evidence the commissioners found the facts to exist that would require such commitment. This the record before us fails to do. There is no finding that the person

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charged is an inebriate, and without such finding the conclusion of the commissioners that he is a fit subject for treatment in the hospital is wholly unwarranted. It would seem that the commissioners have overlooked the importance of proceedings under which a citizen is to be deprived of his liberty, and have failed to appreciate the great responsibility that is placed upon them by the statute in question.

The manner in which the case has been presented here is not such as to justify us in discussing and passing upon the various important questions that were with more or less sincerity presented upon the argument. We do not find it necessary to determine in this proceeding whether the statute in question is unconstitutional, or whether, if the statute is constitutional, the party charged must in some stage of the proceeding be allowed a trial by jury. It is said that the same proceedings are required as upon application for the commitment of an insane person. If this is granted, the question would remain whether upon an application for the commitment of a person charged with being insane such person can be wholly deprived of the right of trial by jury. Section 40, ch. 40, Comp. St. 1905, provides: "All persons confined as insane shall be entitled to the benefit of the writ of habeas corpus, and the question of insanity shall be decided at the hearing." Long before the adoption of our constitution guaranteeing the right of trial by jury, that right existed in proceedings of this nature: "If any person be, or shall be, untruly found lunatic \* \* \* be it enacted \* \* \* that every person and persons, grieved or to be grieved by any such office or inquisition, shall and may have his or their traverse to the same immediately or after, at his or their pleasure, and proceed to trial therein, and have like remedy and advantage as in other cases of traverse upon untrue inquisitions or offices founden." 2 Edw. VI, ch. 8, sec. 6. In some jurisdictions in this country it is held that the court may exercise a discretion in the matter of allowing a traverse of the inquisition of lunacy, so far as to ascer-

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tain whether the person charged "is really desirous of a traverse and has mind enough understandingly to make such a request of the court"; but exercising such a discretion is very different from refusing a jury trial when there is reasonable doubt of insanity. How far such suggestions should be considered in construing this new statute for the detention of inebriates has not been seriously discussed in the case at bar. We do not find it to be our duty to decide them, or to do more than to suggest them here. There is not sufficient substance or regularity in these proceedings to warrant the detention of the relator.

The writ is allowed, and the relator discharged.

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WRIT ALLOWED.

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**SOVEREIGN CAMP, WOODMEN OF THE WORLD, v. MABEL P. OGDEN.**

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,140.

1. **Beneficial Associations: ASSESSMENTS.** Where the constitution and laws of a fraternal-beneficiary association provide that the members shall pay one assessment each month, unless certain designated officers determine its payment unnecessary, the payment of such assessment, when called, cannot be resisted on the ground that it was not lawfully made.
2. ——: **ACTION ON CERTIFICATE: ANSWER.** An answer in an action on a beneficiary certificate, which sets forth the delinquency of the member in the payment of his assessments, the constitution and laws of the association which expressly declare a suspension of membership and a forfeiture of the beneficiary certificate therefor, together with the proceedings of the association constituting a valid call for the delinquent assessment, states a valid defense to such action. *Chapple v. Sovereign Camp, W. O. W.*, 64 Neb. 55, followed.

**ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. Reversed.**

*Brome & Burnett*, for plaintiff in error.

*Joel W. West*, contra.

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Sovereign Camp, W. O. W., v. Ogden.

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BARNES, J.

On the 9th day of May, 1899, the Sovereign Camp of the Woodmen of the World, a fraternal-beneficiary association organized under the laws of this state, accepted the application of Charles Ogden, then residing in the city of Omaha, to become a member of said association, and on said day issued to him its certain beneficiary certificate by which it was provided that at his death the association would pay to Mabel P. Ogden, his wife, the sum of \$2,000. Said Ogden thereafter became a member of Omaha Camp No. 16 of said fraternity, and paid all of the dues, charges and assessments required to continue him a member thereof in good standing until the assessment of Nov. 20, 1903, which he failed and neglected to pay. Thereafter, on the 25th day of January, 1904, he died a natural death from an attack of apoplexy, and his widow, in whose favor the beneficiary certificate above mentioned was issued, commenced an action in the district court for Douglas county to recover the amount alleged to be due thereon. Her petition was in the usual form, and was sufficient in substance to state a cause of action against the association. It was alleged therein, among other things, that at the time of his death her husband, Charles Ogden, was a member of said fraternity in good standing, and had paid all of the dues, charges and assessments made against him by said association. To this petition the association filed its answer, by which the allegation above quoted was denied, and it was affirmatively alleged that at the time of the death of the said Charles Ogden he had been and was suspended for the nonpayment of his December, 1903, assessment. The answer was full and complete, and set forth the articles of incorporation, the constitution and laws of the association, together with the call made for the delinquent assessment. It appears from the answer that the assessment in question was due on the first day of December, 1903; that payment of the same could be made at any time before the first day of January thereafter; that

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such payment was not made, and the assured became and was suspended by operation of the articles of incorporation, constitution and by-laws of the association, and was no longer entitled to participate in any of the benefits of the fraternity. To this answer the plaintiff filed a general demurrer which was sustained by the court, and judgment was thereupon rendered against the defendant for the amount named in the beneficiary certificate. From that judgment the association brings the case to this court by a petition in error.

It is contended that the answer states a perfect defense to the plaintiff's cause of action, and therefore the district court erred in sustaining the demurrer and rendering judgment against the association. We think this case is ruled by *Chapple v. Sovereign Camp, W. O. W.*, 64 Neb. 55. The only difference between the facts in that case and the one at bar seems to be that there the member was delinquent in the payment of two or three assessments, while in the instant case he was delinquent in the payment of but one. In that case it was held that, when the by-laws of such an association expressly declare that the fact of delinquency in the payment of an assessment shall work a forfeiture of membership, no action of the camp is required to suspend such a member, and that he loses all his rights to the benefits of the fraternity by such delinquency.

It is contended by the defendant in error that the delinquent assessment of November 20, 1903, was not lawfully made, therefore Ogden could not be suspended for its non-payment. The argument is that the assessment in question appears to have been made by the sovereign commander and the chairman of the finance committee, and not by the sovereign camp or the board of directors, when such camp was not in session. Section 56 of the constitution and the laws of the association set forth in its answer provides, in substance, that in order to pay death losses, disability benefits, monument obligations and emergency fund, and sovereign camp general fund dues, every applicant admitted to membership prior to September 1, 1901,

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is required to pay assessments upon their ages respectively when becoming members of the order, except as otherwise provided by sections 43 and 67 of said constitution and laws, and that at the age of 42 years (the age of the said Ogden) the rate of assessment on a \$2,000 certificate is \$1.95. It is provided by section 108 of said laws: "On or about the 20th day of each month the sovereign commander and chairman of the sovereign finance committee shall determine the number of assessments, if any, necessary to provide for the payment of death benefits, monuments, and total disability claims, and shall so notify the sovereign clerk." It is further provided by section 109: "Every member of the order shall pay to the clerk of his camp each month one assessment payment as required in section 56, which shall be credited to a fund known as the sovereign camp fund, and he shall also pay such camp dues as may be required by the laws of his camp. He shall pay any additional assessments for the sovereign camp fund and camp dues, or either, which may be legally called. If he fails to make any such payments on or before the first day of the month following he shall stand suspended, and during such suspension his beneficiary certificate shall be void." It is further provided that a member suspended for nonpayment of assessments or dues is not entitled to any of the benefits of the order. Construing all of the provisions of the constitution and laws together, it seems clear that each member of the association was required to pay at least one assessment each month, unless he should be notified that the sovereign commander and the chairman of the finance committee had determined that the payment of such assessment was unnecessary; and it was the duty of the deceased to pay his December assessment, amounting to \$1.95, as above stated. It also appears that the assessment in question was not made or called by the sovereign commander and the chairman of the finance committee, but was provided for by the constitution and laws of the association. It was a standing monthly assessment which was to be paid by each member of the associa-

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tion, unless he should be notified that the officers above named had determined such payment unnecessary. It may be further said that, if it were the fact that the assessment in question had been called by those officers instead of the sovereign commander or the board of directors, still it would have been valid under the rule announced in *Chapple v. Sovereign Camp, W. O. W., supra*. For it was there held that the empowering of two designated officers of the society to make an assessment on a certain day in each calendar month, and requiring the clerk of the superior branch of the order to immediately give notice of the making of the same to the clerks of the inferior associations, is a sufficient compliance with the laws of the association to uphold the assessment. It is alleged in the answer that on the 20th day of November, 1903, the sovereign commander and the secretary of finance of the association determined that the payment of the assessment in question would be necessary; and it is not claimed that the deceased was entitled to have notice of that fact, or that he was without such notice. When he failed to pay his assessment at some time during the month of December, 1903, as alleged in the answer, he became suspended by operation of the laws of the association of which he was a member and by which he was bound. And he was not thereafter entitled to share in any of the benefits of the association. It appears that Ogden died while so suspended and such facts constitute a complete defense to an action on his beneficiary certificate, and the demurrer to the answer should have been overruled.

Therefore the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause is remanded for further proceedings according to law.

**REVERSED.**

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Gettschmann v. County Commissioners of Douglas County.

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**BERTHA GETZSCHMANN ET AL., APPELLANTS, V. BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF DOUGLAS COUNTY ET AL.,  
APPELLEES.**

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,037.

**Taxation: DELINQUENT TAX LIST: PUBLICATION: INJUNCTION.** Section 196, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1905, after providing for the publication of the delinquent tax list in a newspaper published and of general circulation in the county, to be designated by the county board, contains the further provision that "if there be published in said county newspapers printed in the German, Swedish or Bohemian languages, having been regularly published in said county for ten successive years or more, and having a daily, semi-weekly or weekly circulation among regular, *bona fide* subscribers of fifteen hundred copies or more, the said notice shall also be published in a newspaper in each of said languages, to be designated by the board of county commissioners." *Held*, That where the evidence shows that a hearing was had before the county board as to the qualifications of certain rival newspapers and that there was an actual controversy upon good grounds as to whether certain papers possessed the necessary requirements, and the board acted upon conflicting evidence in good faith in designating the newspapers, a court of equity will not interfere by injunction to restrain or control its action.

**APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
ABRAHAM L. SUTTON, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*Charles W. Haller, for appellants.*

*James P. English, Frank L. Weaver, W. W. Slabaugh  
and Frank A. Shotwell, contra.*

**LETTON, J.**

This action was brought by the plaintiff Gettschmann, who is the owner and publisher of a weekly newspaper, named the "Nebraska Tribune," printed in the German language in Douglas county, and by the Pokrok Publishing Company, which is the owner and publisher of a weekly newspaper named the "Pokrok Zapadu," printed in the Bohemian language in the same county, to enjoin the de-

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fendant county board from entering into a contract with the defendants Simmons and the National Printing Company, owners respectively of the "German Westliche Presse," a weekly newspaper printed in the German language, and the "Osveta Americka," a weekly newspaper printed in the Bohemian language, both published in that county, for the publication of the delinquent tax list in said papers, or from paying the defendants any sum for the publication thereof, and to restrain the defendant county treasurer of Douglas county from delivering the delinquent tax list to either of these papers for publication. The district court denied the relief prayed, and the plaintiffs bring the case here on appeal.

1. Section 196, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1905 (Ann. St. sec. 10595), providing for the publication of the delinquent tax list, is as follows: "The county treasurer shall cause said list and accompanying notice to be published once a week for three consecutive weeks prior to the date of sale, commencing the first week in October, in a newspaper published in said county having a general circulation therein, which newspaper shall be designated by the county board, and if there be published in said county newspapers printed in the German, Swedish or Bohemian languages, having been regularly published in said county for ten successive years or more, and having a daily, semi-weekly or weekly circulation among regular, *bona fide* subscribers of fifteen hundred copies or more, the said notice shall also be published in a newspaper in each of said languages to be designated by the board of county commissioners; Provided, however, that if the total cost of such publication in all of said newspapers shall exceed the total amount herein provided to be taxed against the lands and lots so advertised, then the said publication shall be made only in the said newspaper printed in the English language, and shall also cause to be posted up in some conspicuous place in his office, a copy of said list and notice. The treasurer shall add to each description of lands so advertised, other than town

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lots, the sum of twenty cents, and for each town lot the sum of ten cents, to defray the expenses of advertising, which sum shall be added to the amount due on said land or town lot for taxes and collected in the same manner as taxes."

The plaintiff's contention is that the respective newspapers belonging to them are the only newspapers in Douglas county which comply with the requirements of the law, and that the county board was without power or jurisdiction to designate the newspapers owned by the defendants as proper papers in which to publish the delinquent tax list. Each of the four papers mentioned made application to the county board to be designated by such body as one of the papers in which the delinquent tax list of the county should be published. The plaintiffs' application was denied and the papers owned by the defendants were selected. The plaintiffs contend that the power of the county board to designate papers printed in a foreign language to publish the tax list is limited to such as have been regularly published in the county for ten successive years or more, and that it does not appear that the papers designated by the board had been published for that period. It appears from the evidence that at the time the newspapers were selected by the county board a hearing was had as to whether or not the designated papers complied with the statutory requirements, and that there was a conflict of testimony upon that point. The successful applicants maintained that their papers were continuations of papers which had been published under other names successively for the period required, though it was admitted that they had not been published for the requisite length of time by the same name under which they now appeared. However, the evidence before the board not being preserved, it is impossible to tell exactly how much evidence was produced. Sufficient of the evidence presented to the board appears in the case, however, to show that there was an actual controversy upon good grounds as to the mooted question.

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It may be questioned whether, if the same evidence had been submitted to a jury or to this court in the first instance, the same conclusion would have been reached as that which the board adopted, but, upon the whole, it appears that there was evidence enough before the board to justify its finding that the papers selected fulfilled the statutory requirements, even though the papers had not always been published independently or under the same names for the statutory period. It would seem, therefore, that the board acted in good faith in considering that the designated papers complied with the statutory requirements. In the exercise of the power reposed in the board to determine whether the papers seeking to publish the tax list fell within the class which are eligible under the statute, infallibility of judgment is never expected nor required. The most that can be required is that it act in good faith, and not in an unwarranted and arbitrary manner and without regard to the evidence before it. If it had been shown that the commissioners were proceeding under a mere pretense of right, or wilfully in violation of the statute, a different case would be presented. In such case a court would interfere to restrain the plain violation of law. The district court found specially that the papers owned by the defendants had both been in existence for a period of ten years prior to the 5th day of September, 1903, and generally upon the other issues for the defendants. There is sufficient evidence to support the finding, and hence sufficient to justify the action of the county board.

The judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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SARAH M. PETERSON V. ESTATE OF JOHN H. BAUER ET AL.\*

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,312.

1. **Testamentary Bequest: EVIDENCE.** An alleged oral contract to adopt a child of a stranger and to make a testamentary bequest of an aliquot share of one's estate in his behalf, at the expense of children of the blood, or to make him a joint and equal heir with such children, must be established by clear and satisfactory evidence.
2. ———: **REMEDY.** A proceeding to enforce such an alleged contract is in substance a suit for specific performance, which is not litigable in the ordinary course of probate jurisdiction or in an action at law, but in proceedings in equity.
3. **Trial: REVIEW.** In the trial of such a suit the functions of a jury, if one is called, are advisory only, and the court cannot commit reversible error in the giving or refusal of instructions.
4. **Trial to Court.** The prosecution of such a claim is an appeal to the conscience of the trial judge, who should admit in evidence every matter having a fairly ascertainable tendency to enlighten his understanding as to the situation and circumstances of the parties.

ERROR to the district court for Cass county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*P. A. Wells and Fawcett & Abbott, for plaintiff in error.*

*Jesse L. Root and Jesse B. Strode, contra.*

AMES, C.

John H. Bauer, a resident of Cass county in this state, died in said county in June, 1903, leaving a will, afterwards duly admitted to probate, by which he bequeathed all his personality to his son John Albert, and devised to him all his real estate for life, remainder in fee to his issue. Afterwards, during the progress of administration, there was filed in the county court a claim of which the following is a copy: "That the said estate of John H.

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 661, *post.*

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Bauer, deceased, is indebted to Sarah Matilda Peterson for 20 years' labor performed for and services rendered to John H. Bauer, deceased, during his lifetime, at the instance and request of said John H. Bauer, deceased, in the sum of \$9,000, for which services the said John H. Bauer, deceased, on or about February, 1872, orally promised and agreed to pay plaintiff by devise or bequest in his last will and testament, and which payment said John H. Bauer agreed should amount to and be not less than a sum equal to the value of one-half of the entire estate which he might leave at his death; said deceased having failed to provide for the payment of said claim in his will, and the value of the estate of said John H. Bauer at the time of his death being the sum of \$18,000, there is now due and owing to said Sarah Matilda Peterson from the estate of John H. Bauer, deceased, for such labor and services, the said sum of \$9,000; no part of which has been paid. Wherefore, plaintiff prays judgment against the defendant for said sum of \$9,000, together with interest thereon from the 29th day of June, 1903, and for costs." The agreement thus set forth, if it existed, was undoubtedly testamentary in its character. *Teske v. Dittberner*, 65 Neb. 167, 70 Neb. 544. The county court allowed the claim for an amount approximating \$6,000, and the administrator appealed to the district court, where issues were made up, and the result of a trial to the court and a jury was a verdict and judgment for the defense, from which the plaintiff prosecutes error in this court, alleging certain errors in instructions and in the exclusion of evidence offered in her behalf. Our attention is, however, not called to sufficient competent evidence in the record tending to prove the making of any such agreement as is set forth in the petition by or on behalf of the plaintiff with the deceased.

In 1872 the father of the plaintiff was a widower residing in Cass county, and the father also of a large family of children, among whom was a daughter named Mary, who has since married, and who is the principal witness for the plaintiff. In fact she is the only witness for the

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plaintiff who assumes to testify with any distinctness as to what occurred or what conversation was had between her father and the deceased, at the time alleged in the petition, concerning the custody by the latter of the plaintiff, who was then a child seven years of age. She testified that she was present at the only interview concerning the matter in controversy shown to have been had between the deceased and her father, and that the former then said that he would like to have the girl as his own child and she should have half he had at his death. "Q. Did he say how he would leave it to her? A. She was to be adopted by him. Q. Did he say he would adopt her? A. Yes, sir. Q. And he would leave her half? A. Yes, sir. Q. Mr. Bauer voluntarily said there that he would leave half he had to this little girl if she would go and live with him? A. Yes, sir." This is the substance of the testimony of this witness, which she repeated two or three times, but it will be observed that the answers to the last two questions were put into her mouth by counsel and are entitled to but little, if any, weight. Several other witnesses on behalf of the plaintiff testified to divers conversations with the deceased, extending over a series of years, after she became an inmate of his household, in which he expressed satisfaction with her character and conduct and considerable affection for her, and in which he was importuned to make provision for her at his death, and in which with some reluctance, or at least with hesitation, he said that he intended that she should have "her share" or her "equal share" or that "he meant to divide equally between her and Ally," meaning his son. The girl was, in her ninth year, baptized with the ceremonies of the Congregational church by the family name of her foster-parents, by which she was always afterwards, until her marriage, commonly known, and she customarily spoke to and of them as her "papa" and "mamma" and they of her as their daughter, and the conduct of the parties in all other respects simulated that relationship. But it does not appear that there was ever any agreement or conversation

between the deceased and the plaintiff concerning any pecuniary provision to be made by him for her, and there is no evidence that he ever admitted having made any pledge or promise to her, or to anyone else, that he would make any testamentary disposition of his property for her benefit. His reluctantly expressed intent that she should be in some way provided for, so far from being such an admission, indicates on the contrary that both he and his interlocutors were aware that he was not already under legal obligation so to do, otherwise his natural and probable response to their importunities would have been that he had bound himself in conscience, if not in law, and would abide by his agreement. She remained in the home of the deceased for 18 years, being clothed, educated and treated in all respects as a social equal, until her marriage, at the age of 25 or 26, in 1890, shortly prior to which event he conveyed to her a tract of real estate of a value at that time variously estimated at from \$1,000 to \$3,000. It is plain that she has made no great sacrifice and has suffered no great wrong or hardship such as, it is said, sometimes leads the courts to announce "bad law." It may well enough be said that the deceased believed that he had fully satisfied his expressed intent to make suitable and adequate provision for her out of his estate, the more especially as the will admitted to probate superseded one made at a time about half way between the marriage and his death, in which no provision was made for her.

We do not think it worth while to treat of the alleged agreement to adopt the plaintiff, which, however, is emphatically denied by the only other living witness who was present at the interview at which it is represented to have been made, and who says that the only promise that deceased made was that he would rear and educate and clothe and care for the child until she should attain her majority. It is quite obvious that an agreement to adopt is an entirely different thing from an agreement to bequeath or devise. A legal adoption, under the forms pro-

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vided by the statute, would have given the plaintiff nothing more than the *status* of a child of her foster-father born in wedlock, and would have conferred upon her no interest in his estate, except in case of intestacy, which has not occurred. It may be added, however, that the story of an agreement either to adopt or make a testamentary provision for the plaintiff with the effect of a partial disinheritance of the deceased's own son is destitute of much inherent probability. Bauer and Nix, the father of the child, were not only not related by blood or affinity, but appear to have been utter strangers, as were also the former and the plaintiff, until the occasion of the interview at which the supposed agreement in question is alleged to have been made. Bauer, it seems, made known to a neighbor woman, named Smith, his desire to adopt a girl, at least such is the story of the latter, and she, with a friendly disposition to please, introduced him to Nix and his family, much as she might have introduced a man desiring to purchase a horse to one whom she knew to be the owner of a large number of such animals, ten to be exact, some of which, she presumed, he would be willing to sell. That the child should have been inspected and irrevocably purchased at a price relatively so high, at this first brief interview, and without any knowledge by hearsay or otherwise of her disposition, character or capabilities, and without apparent knowledge on the part of her father of the character and moral responsibilities of the purchaser, is such a transaction as appears to us to be so extremely unusual, if it ever happens, as to require to be established by evidence more cogent than the testimony of interested witnesses and of neighboring gossips after the lapse of more than 30 years from the date of the supposed event. Rather, in such a case, we think, would the proposed foster-parent have exercised at least the prudence of an ordinary purchaser of a family nag, namely, he would have taken the child home with him and introduced her to his wife, and have ascertained by acquaintance and experience her fitness for the contemplated relation with him-

self and family, and would have reflected somewhat upon the extent, if any, to which he could afford, or it would be prudent, to obligate himself and his estate in her behalf. And this, we are convinced, is precisely what was done, or at any rate it is the only conclusion to which, in our minds, the evidence points. Even Mary, the sister of the plaintiff and her principal witness, testifies that the matter was not finally concluded at this interview, but that the father was "to go over to Mr. Bauer's afterwards and fix up the papers" of adoption. And afterwards there were frequent conversations by the witness and the neighbors with Bauer about the girl and her conduct, and about his making some contract or arrangement by which to insure her a share of his estate, all of which tends to show that no definite or final arrangement or provision had been previously made.

Counsel for plaintiff relies chiefly upon the decision of this court in *Kofka v. Rosicky*, 41 Neb. 328. But the circumstances of that case were, we think, materially different from those in the present one. The child was an infant, a few months old, and the parents and foster-parents near relatives, the latter not having or having hope of issue of their own, and the purport of the agreement was indicated in a written declaration in the form of a will by the foster-mother made after the death of her husband and in contemplation of her own speedy dissolution. And the relation which had been assumed toward the child had been frequently recognized and talked about by both in their social intercourse with neighbors and friends. Presumably not all the facts and circumstances which influenced the mind of the court are set forth in the opinion, which in such cases it is almost impossible to do, but that it was not intended to open a door for vague inferences from doubtful or ambiguous testimony of more or less interested or meddlesome witnesses concerning oral conversations alleged to have taken place at a time long past (in this case nearly a third of a century) is evident from the following excerpt:

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"There is a line of authorities emanating from some of our able courts of last resort, most notably those of Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa, which denies the right to specific performance of a contract similar to the one under which the claim in this case arises mainly upon the ground that the statute was enacted to cover just such cases; that it will work no hardship to require parties to put all such agreements in writing and that the testimony of witnesses should not be received, probably several years after the happening of the event, to establish a contract by parol, by which the course of the descent of lands will be changed. These are strong and cogent reasons, and it is not our province to attack or attempt to refute them. As we understand it, they are the underlying, principal reasons for the rule as embodied in the statute; but we do not think the rule should be so rigidly adhered to as to accomplish a fraud as against one of the persons affected by the contract to which it is to be applied."

In harmony with the foregoing expression this court held in *Teske v. Dittberner*, 65 Neb. 167, that such an agreement as is here contended for "is in contravention of the letter both of the statute of frauds and of the statute of wills, and should be closely scrutinized, so that the transaction may not be made the means of the exercise of undue influence or the practice of fraud or other abuses." The pretty nearly, if not quite, universal attitude of the courts toward such contentions as that brought forward in this case is forcibly but accurately expressed by the supreme court of Illinois in *Dicken v. McKinley*, 163 Ill. 318, 54 Am. St. Rep. 471, as follows: "Such contracts are looked upon with suspicion, and are only sustained when established by the clearest and strongest evidence." And in *Kinney v. Murray*, 170 Mo. 674, 700: "But, the proof of such a contract must be so cogent, clear and forcible as to leave no reasonable doubt in the mind of the chancellor as to its terms and character." See also *Knight v. Tripp*, 121 Cal. 674; *Hamlin v. Stevens*, 177 N. Y. 39; *Newton's Executor v. Field*, 98 Ky. 186; *Wall's Appeal*, 111 Pa. St.

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460, 56 Am. Rep. 288; *Eastwood v. Crane*, 125 Ia. 707. Tested by the rules promulgated in these decisions, which have twice received the implied approval of this court, the evidence of the plaintiff falls far short of establishing her alleged cause of action.

There remains for decision a matter of vital importance to this case and to future controversies of like kind, and also two assignments of error upon which counsel for plaintiff places great reliance; one having reference to an instruction given to the jury, and the other with respect to a ruling on an objection to evidence. The proceeding is in the form of an action at law, having originated in the district court in an appeal from an allowance by the county court of a money demand filed against the estate of the deceased, but the nature of the claim, notwithstanding its form, is really and practically a suit to compel a specific performance of the alleged contract and like all such demands is addressed to the conscience of the trial judge sitting as a chancellor. The issue is one with which from its very nature and essence a court of law is incompetent to deal, and the present attempt to litigate it in such a tribunal is, so far as our information goes, without precedent. Counsel for neither party has cited to us any authority for such a proceeding and we doubt exceedingly if any can be found. The suit is one to bind specifically the estate, real and personal, of the deceased with a contract alleged to have been made by him in his lifetime, which is confessedly void by positive statute both in form and in substance, but which it is contended that equity will nevertheless enforce for the purpose of preventing fraud and doing exact justice. To such a suit the persons claiming title to the lands of the decedent as heirs or devisees, and asserting rights as distributees of the personality by will or by statute, are indispensable parties without whose presence a final determination of the controversy cannot be made. It follows that such a claim is not litigable in the ordinary course of probate administration, but must be prosecuted, if at all, in a court of original

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and general equitable jurisdiction and powers, the executor or administrator being a proper but not in all instances a necessary party. This principle is distinctly announced in *Kofka v. Rosicky, supra*, in which it is said: "It is a matter of discretion in the court which withholds or grants relief, according to the circumstances of each particular case, when the general rules and principles which govern the court will not furnish any exact measure of justice between the parties," citing 2 Story, *Equity Jurisprudence* (13th ed.), sec. 742; *Clarke v. Koenig*, 36 Neb. 572, and several other authorities at considerable length. It further follows that, when a jury is called in the trial of such a case, its functions are advisory only, and the court cannot commit reversible error in the giving or refusal of instructions. The point is well illustrated by one of the assignments of error before referred to. The court gave to the jury the rule of law approved by all the above cited authorities as applicable to the trial of such issues, viz., that the plaintiff in order to prevail must establish her contention "by clear and satisfactory proof." That such an instruction in the trial of an action at law would be reversible error goes, in this state, without saying; yet, if a jury may try and determine the issues in such a case as this, it must be given or there will be danger of a complete failure of justice.

The court refused an offer by the plaintiff to prove that John Albert, the alleged son and sole beneficiary in the will of Bauer, is not his son but a stepson, that is, the son of his wife by a former husband. We think that the evidence ought to have been admitted. It might, in some circumstances, have an important bearing upon the motives and intent of the deceased, and upon the decision of the probability of his having entered into the alleged agreement. The inquiry, as has been often said, was addressed to the conscience of the court and nothing should have been excluded which had a fairly ascertainable tendency to enlighten his understanding as to the situation and circumstances of the parties.

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We do not think it necessary to discuss the case at greater length at this time. The district court rendered a judgment for the defendant upon the merits. This, we think, he was without jurisdiction to do, and we recommend that the judgment be reversed and the action dismissed at the costs of the plaintiff, but without prejudice to a new action against the administrator and the real parties in interest.

EPPERSON, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the action dismissed at the costs of the plaintiff, but without prejudice to a new action against the administrator and the real parties in interest.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed March 21, 1907. *Former judgment adhered to:*

1. **Heirship: Equity.** The right of heirship in an estate can only be established in an action in equity; an action at law cannot be maintained to recover the value of an undivided half of an unsettled estate on the ground that the decedent agreed in his lifetime to make the claimant his heir.

2. **Syllabus of former opinion explained.**

LETTON, J.

The issues involved in this case have been stated in a former opinion, *ante*, p. 652. The correctness of the statements of fact and conclusions of law found in the opinion of Mr. Commissioner AMES were strongly attacked by a brief upon motion for rehearing. A rehearing was granted and the case is again before us for consideration.

In the former opinion, *ante*, p. 652, it was said: "Our attention is, however, not called to sufficient competent evidence in the record tending to prove the making of any such agreement as is set forth in the petition." This statement has been assailed by plaintiff's counsel. The agree-

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ment set forth in the petition was that, in consideration of services to be rendered by the plaintiff, "John H. Bauer, deceased, orally promised and agreed to pay plaintiff by devise or bequest in his last will and testament, and which payment said John H. Bauer agreed should amount to and be not less than a sum equal to the value of one-half of the entire estate which he might leave at his death." The evidence on plaintiff's behalf, standing alone, tends only to prove that there was an agreement that Bauer should leave the plaintiff one-half of his estate, which is a very different thing from proving that he agreed to pay by devise or bequest, a sum equal to the value of one-half his estate. The one is an agreement to pay in money, the other to pay in property. A plaintiff seeking to recover upon a promise to pay a sum equal to the value of a certain horse would not be entitled to succeed in his action if he proved a promise to pay by the delivery of the horse, since his allegations and his proof would not agree, hence the language criticized is not unwarranted under the proof offered.

In the brief and argument on rehearing, severe criticisms were made upon the statements of fact in the opinion. It is sufficient to say that some minor errors occurred, but in the main the statement of facts reflects the evidence. It may be said, however, that the writer does not view the evidence on the part of the plaintiff in the unfavorable light in which it plainly appeared to Mr. Commissioner AMES, and upon another trial, with evidence introduced which we have held was erroneously excluded at the former trial, the entire testimony should receive the careful and candid consideration of the trial court, unbiased and uninfluenced by any statements or conclusions as to the facts expressed in either of the opinions of this court, and should be tried *de novo* in all particulars. Whether or not the evidence will sustain an action for specific performance, or an action for the value of the services, is a matter which is left open for future determination upon such evidence as may be produced.

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The proposition that the alleged contract must be established by clear and satisfactory evidence is very vigorously attacked by plaintiff, and it is contended that a preponderance of the evidence is all that is required in any civil action, and that a requirement that the evidence be "clear and satisfactory" requires more than a preponderance and requires it to be established beyond a reasonable doubt, citing *Stevens v. Carson*, 30 Neb. 544; *McEvony v. Rowland*, 43 Neb. 97; *McCord-Brady Co. v. Moneyhan*, 59 Neb. 593; *Western Mattress Co. v. Potter*, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 627. It may be said, however, that, while it is true that a preponderance of the evidence is all that is required of the plaintiff in any civil action, yet the nature of some cases is such that the probative force of testimony may be weakened or counterbalanced to some extent by the existence of legal presumptions or other circumstances which may affect its credibility. Where it is sought to establish a resulting trust by parol evidence, or where it is sought in effect to evade the statute of wills or the statute of frauds in like manner, or where conveyances have been made by parties in failing circumstances to near relatives, the circumstances of the case require that the proof be clear and satisfactory in order to overcome the presumption which the circumstances raise. The nature of the case demands a closer scrutiny of the evidence than in an ordinary controversy, but if after testing it by these canons it preponderates in favor of the plaintiff it is sufficient to justify and sustain a finding in his favor. *Veeder v. McKinley-Lanning L. & T. Co.*, 61 Neb. 892; *Doane v. Dunham*, 64 Neb. 135. The former opinion is correct in requiring that the proof in such a case as this be "clear and satisfactory."

We think it is unnecessary at this time to reexamine the questions passed upon in the cases of *Kofka v. Rosicky*, 41 Neb. 328, 25 L. R. A. 207; *Teske v. Dittberner*, 65 Neb. 167, 70 Neb. 544, and *Pemberton v. Pemberton's Heirs*, p. 669, *post*. As was pointed out in the opinions in these cases, it is impossible to reconcile the views of the various

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courts of the United States upon the questions presented, but this court has adopted the rule in *Kofka v. Rosicky, supra*, and we are content to abide by the doctrine of that case as being the most apt to prevent injustice and to do equity. In such a case, if the trial court, bearing in mind the ease with which claims may be presented when the other party to the alleged contract is dead, carefully scrutinizes the evidence and weighs the same, taking fully into consideration the nature of the claims and the known inaccuracy of memory with reference to oral statements made years before the time of the trial, we think the evil consequences to estates which may accrue, and which the counsel for the defendant so strongly sets forth, may be greatly minimized. The difficulty of proving contracts made many years before, when the lips of both participants are sealed, one by death and the other by the law, operates to the disadvantage of the claimant, and it may prevent a just recovery in as many cases as the ease with which claims may be trumped up may operate to spoliate estates; though claims of this kind are always dangerous.

The contention of the plaintiff briefly stated is: That John H. Bauer agreed to leave the plaintiff one-half of the value of his estate in consideration for services to be rendered; that the services were rendered; that he broke the contract by failing to leave her one-half of his estate; that she was entitled to her election of two remedies, either to bring an action for specific performance, or to recover damages for the breach of the contract; that in an action for the breach of the contract the measure of damages is the value of the property to which the plaintiff was entitled, but which she failed to receive. In support of this position the plaintiff cites *Sharkey v. McDermott*, 91 Mo. 647; *Frost v. Tarr*, 53 Ind. 390; *Burlingame v. Burlingame*, 7 Cow. (N. Y.) 92; *Malaun's Adm'r v. Ammon*, 1 Grant Cas. (Pa.) 123, and other cases. *Sharkey v. McDermott, supra*, was an action for specific performance under circumstances similar to those in *Kofka v. Rosicky, supra*. The case was decided upon a demurrer to the petition, and,

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since the petition did not state whether the contract was in writing or not, the court held that it would be presumed to be in writing. This case throws no light upon the point involved. The facts in *Frost v. Tarr, supra*, were very similar to those alleged in this case. An action at law was brought for damages for breach of the contract, and it was held that the damages may be measured by the value of the portion of the estate promised. This is in line with the plaintiff's contention in this case. Nine years later the case of *Wallace v. Long*, 105 Ind. 522, came before the same court. In the opinion the prior cases in Indiana and other states are reviewed, and it is pointed out that *Malaun's Adm'r v. Ammon, supra*, had been overruled in *Hertzog v. Hertzog's Adm'r*, 34 Pa. St. 418, and that so much of *Burlingame v. Burlingame, supra*, as gave support to the doctrine of *Frost v. Tarr, supra*, had been disapproved by the court of appeals in New York in *Erben v. Lorillard*, 19 N. Y. 299. We think it unnecessary at this time to decide the question as to which of these conflicting views we shall adopt, since the contract which the plaintiff counts upon is for a sum equal to one-half of the value of Bauer's estate. This means the net value, and not the gross value. The claims of creditors, if any, and the expense and costs of administration, including funeral expenses, etc., must be deducted. *Graham v. Graham's Ex'r*, 34 Pa. St. 475. No proof was offered to show what the net value of the estate is. The estate is still unsettled. A jury is not competent to determine such a question in this action, and the proper tribunal to take an accounting of the debts and liabilities of the estates of deceased persons and to determine the net amount of an estate for distribution is the probate court. *Grant v. Grant*, 63 Conn. 530, 38 Am. St. Rep. 379.

The conclusions of the former opinion that such an action as this, to appropriate one-half of the net value of the estate, should be in chancery, where all persons interested may be made parties, are sound and are adhered to. While, as we have said, we do not take the same view of

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the evidence as expressed in the former opinion, we think the propositions of law laid down in the syllabus, as herein explained, are sound.

FORMER JUDGMENT ADHERED TO.

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WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY, APPELLEE, V.  
DOUGLAS COUNTY ET AL., APPELLANTS.

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,612.

1. A suit in equity will not lie when the plaintiff has a plain, adequate and speedy remedy at law.
2. Taxation: OVERVALUATION: REMEDY. The statute affords a plain adequate and speedy remedy to one whose property has been excessively valued for taxation and in cases in which the county board of equalization has committed prejudicial errors or irregularities in procedure.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
ABRAHAM L. SUTTON, JUDGE. *Reversed and dismissed.*

*W. W. Slabaugh and A. H. Murdock, for appellants.*

*W. W. Morsman and F. A. Brogan, contra.*

AMES, C.

In May, 1904, the county assessor of Douglas county delivered to appellee a printed notice accompanied by a blank form requiring it to make and return a statement for the purposes of assessment and taxation showing in detail the description and amount or value of its tangible personal property situate in the county and also "gross receipts for the year, representing franchise valuation as per detailed statement on back." The president of the company made a return under oath showing the amount in value of such personal property to be \$20,208.90, and of such gross receipts \$27,092.29, and computing the two items as a "total personal" of \$47,301.19. Substantially

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this latter amount the assessor returned as his own valuation for the purposes of taxation of the personal property and franchises of the appellee. Subsequently the county clerk by direction of the county board served the appellee with a written notice to the effect that complaint had been made that its assessment of personality was too low, and requiring it to appear before the board at the office of the latter on a day and hour named "and show cause, if any there be, why said assessment should not be raised." At the time and place named in the latter mentioned notice the company did appear by its manager, and such proceedings were had and done that the board caused to be entered upon its records in connection with the proceedings the words "Raised to \$77,300." In due time the clerk extended the assessment, as thus raised, upon his tax list showing the "assessed value" of the personality of the company to be \$15,460 instead of \$9,460 as returned by the assessor, and taxes were levied on the former sum in the amount of \$477. But before the tax became due, this court had held in *Western Union T. Co. v. City of Omaha*, 73 Neb. 527, that so much of the revenue act of 1903 as requires the gross receipts of the company to be taken as a measure of the value of its franchises is unconstitutional and void, and the appellee thereupon tendered and offered to pay to the treasurer so much only of the tax as was founded upon its own estimate, made and returned as above stated, of the actual value of its tangible personal property, namely, \$20,208.90. The tender was refused, whereupon this action was begun seeking a perpetual injunction against all of the tax in excess of the tender. There was an answer and a trial, but no dispute of facts, and a decree was rendered as prayed. The county appeals.

It seems to us that the appellee, plaintiff below, mistook its remedy. It cannot be disputed, and it is not attempted so to be, that the assessor and county board were acting within the limits of the powers conferred upon them respectively by the statute, nor can it be questioned that the plaintiff was subject to taxation upon its tangible person-

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alty and franchises. Nor, we think, can it be doubted that gross receipts may be taken into account in estimating the value of franchises; in fact we are unable to understand how the latter can be based upon anything but the revenues they yield, although the legislature cannot prescribe such revenues as the measure of values. If the official mind was unduly influenced by a consideration of the plaintiff's income, and as a consequence placed an excessive estimate upon the value of its possessions, the statute affords it a speedy and effectual remedy by appeal; but the error, if any, did not deprive the board of equalization of jurisdiction or render its determination subject to collateral attack.

It is also urged that the action of the board could have been properly founded only upon a formal written complaint and that none was filed with it. The statute, unlike the preceding revenue law, does not require such a complaint. Comp. St. 1903, ch. 77, art. I, sec. 122. The plaintiff was served with the statutory notice and appeared in response thereto, and made no demand for a formal complaint and no objection because of its absence. If there was or had been any irregularity of procedure in this respect, it was or would have been insufficient to deprive the board of jurisdiction, which it acquired by service of notice and the appearance of the party. The error, if prejudicial, would have been subject to correction by petition in error in the district court, but would not have wholly avoided the proceeding so that it could have been held for naught in a collateral action. In short, if the plaintiff's property and franchises were excessively valued for taxation, or if prejudicial errors and irregularities intervened in the procedure of the county board, the statute afforded the plaintiff a plain, adequate and speedy remedy, and the plaintiff's petition in equity states no cause of action. It is recommended, therefore, that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the action dismissed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the action dismissed.

REVERSED.

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THADDEUS I. C. PEMBERTON v. HEIRS OF GEORGE C.  
PEMBERTON.

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,334.

1. **Contract of Adoption: ENFORCEMENT.** A contract in writing for the adoption of a child, although ineffective as a legal, statutory adoption, may upon a proper showing be enforced in equity.
2. ——: ——. A written contract of adoption which contains a condition binding the foster-parents to make the child "an equal heir to his part of our estate the same as one of our children" may upon a proper showing be specifically enforced against the estate of the deceased foster-parent, who has died intestate.
3. **Case Followed.** *Kofka v. Rosicky*, 41 Neb. 328, followed and approved.

ERROR to the district court for Washington county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

*F. Dolezal*, for plaintiff in error.

*Clark O'Hanlon, Herman Aye and F. A. Brogan, contra.*

OLDHAM, C.

In 1893, George C. Pemberton died intestate in Washington county, Nebraska, and was at the time of his death the owner in fee of certain lands situated in that county. An administrator of the estate was appointed, all debts were paid, and the administration closed prior to the institution of the suit at bar. At the time of Pemberton's death, he left surviving him his wife, Margaret A. Pemberton, but no children born of his marriage. In 1863,

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and while the plaintiff herein, whose natural name is Griffith, was in the custody of his mother, Kate A. Griffith, under a decree of the district court for Douglas county in an action for divorce instituted by the mother against the father, the mother entered into a written contract with Samuel A. Whittier and Deborah Whittier, his wife, in the nature of a deed of adoption, in which she relinquished all right, claim, and demand to the plaintiff, and authorized the Whittiers to adopt said child as their own and give it their name, and to direct, manage, educate, and control said child as their own. The Whittiers on their part specifically agreed that they would immediately take the child into their control and custody, adopt him as their own, and thereafter provide for, educate, and rear him according to their pecuniary and social standing. The contract further recites: "We do further agree that at our death the said child shall be an equal heir to his portion of our estate the same as one of our children, it being the express understanding that we are to treat, control, and in every way provide for said child as our own, we having hereby adopted it as such, and it is mutually agreed that from this date said child shall be known and called by name 'Charles Whittier.'" This instrument was signed by Kate A. Griffith, Samuel Whittier, and Deborah Whittier, and acknowledged before a justice of the peace in Douglas county, on the 27th day of April, 1863. After the execution of this instrument the Whittiers took the child to their home in Washington county and kept him for a couple of months, when by agreement with the deceased, George Pemberton, and wife they delivered the child and the written contract in the form of a deed of adoption to the Pembertons. It appears from the testimony that, when the deed and child were delivered to the Pembertons, the deceased took the deed or contract and went to Omaha to see an attorney, Honorable John I. Redick, to find out if it was necessary to have new papers made to secure the adoption of the child. From some source of information he concluded that it was not, and then scratched out the

names of the Whittiers from the deed and had inserted the names of the Pembertons in their stead. The paper, so changed, appears to have been signed and acknowledged on the 27th day of June, 1863, by George Pemberton and wife, although it is shown by the testimony of the wife that, while she signed the contract, she was not present when it was acknowledged. Thereupon the Pembertons took the charge, control, and custody of the child, then an infant between two and three years of age, gave him their name, sent him to school, and treated him in every particular as their son, referred to him always as their son, and he in turn addressed them as his father and mother. He remained with them, according to the testimony, and conducted himself as a dutiful and industrious son until past the age of 21 years, when, with the knowledge and consent of his foster-parents, he engaged in business for himself in the state of Oregon. After he left the homestead he communicated with his foster-parents, addressing them as "Pa" and "Ma," and received letters from them, written by the mother, however, in which he was addressed as their son. Five or six years before the death of Mr. Pemberton he was stricken with paralysis, and the wife telegraphed to the boy, who returned at once and remained with his foster-parents for over a month. The written contract, above set out, had been kept by Mr. Pemberton among his papers for over 30 years, when, at one time on a visit of the plaintiff to his home, Mrs. Pemberton delivered the contract to him, and he had it in his possession at the time this suit was instituted. It appears from the testimony of the neighbors, as well as the surviving wife, that Mr. Pemberton in his lifetime had always referred to plaintiff as his son, and had frequently stated to his neighbors that plaintiff was his adopted son and that "some day all his property would go to him." It also appears from testimony of one of the neighbors, Mr. Whitford, that shortly before the death of the intestate, when his paralysis had progressed until he was unable to articulate any words, but while he was still in possession of his mental faculties and responded to

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questions asked him by nodding or shaking his head, the witness asked Pemberton if he did not want to make a will. To this question deceased shook his head, meaning no. He then asked him if he wanted the law to take its course, and the deceased nodded his head, meaning that he did. The witness then asked him if he wanted Thad (plaintiff) to have two-thirds and his wife one-third of the property, and again he nodded his head in assent. After the administration of the personal effects of the deceased, plaintiff instituted the suit at bar in the district court for Washington county for the specific performance of the contract of heirship above set out. Two collateral heirs, a brother and a sister of the deceased, answered in the proceeding, denying plaintiff's claim, and alleging that they were each entitled to an undivided one-fifth of the land. At the close of plaintiff's testimony the court dismissed his bill, and entered judgment for the answering defendants. To reverse this judgment plaintiff brings error to this court.

The contest is simply between the plaintiff and the collateral heirs of the deceased, the rights of the surviving wife being recognized in all the pleadings. The wife, however, testified, as far as the court would permit, in support of plaintiff's claim. At the time the contract in issue was entered into there was no statute in the state, or rather territory, of Nebraska, providing for the adoption of children by deed or otherwise, so that plaintiff's right to recover must stand or fall on an interpretation of the written contract, admitted to have been signed by the deceased and his wife at the time above set forth. The question of acknowledgment of this contract is immaterial, as it would be ineffective as a deed of adoption, even if it had been regularly acknowledged by both husband and wife. The question as to whether the delivery of this paper was made to plaintiff by direction of the deceased is also immaterial, because the right of action, if any, on the paper does not depend upon its delivery. The writing offered in evidence was and is admissible for the

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purpose of showing a written contract between the plaintiff's natural mother, legally entitled to his care and custody, and the deceased and wife for plaintiff's benefit. Oral testimony, showing a full compliance with the terms of the contract by the plaintiff, was properly admitted for the purpose of showing that the contract was fully executed on the part of all parties thereto. The fact that there is no testimony in the record, other than the instrument itself, that the mother, Mrs. Griffith, ever consented to the change of names in the contract is immaterial, in view of the fact that such change was made by deceased and wife, and that the natural mother never repudiated the change, but on the contrary permitted the Pembertons at all times to assume and exercise full charge and control of the plaintiff under the terms of the written agreement. It does not lie in the mouths of the collateral heirs of Pemberton, who are claiming under him, to say that he changed the written instrument without the consent of the plaintiff's mother.

That specific performance of a contract of this nature will be enforced in equity, when properly established, is beyond dispute in this jurisdiction since the decision in *Kofka v. Rosicky*, 41 Neb. 328. In the case just cited, an infant child, named Josephine Kofka, was delivered by her parents to John Spilinek and wife, under a verbal agreement that Spilinek and wife, who were respectively aunt and uncle of the child, would adopt her as their own and make her their heir, so that at the death of the Spilneks she would inherit all the property of which they died possessed. The child took the name of Spilinek, and lived with her foster-parents as their child until about 15 years of age, when the foster-father committed suicide, while insane, and also mortally wounded his wife, who died three or four days later. The wife made a will before her death in favor of the child, who was still a minor, and who, with her father as next friend, filed a bill in equity praying for a specific performance of this oral contract; and, notwithstanding the fact that there was a

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statute of adoption in force in this state at the time the oral contract was entered into between the natural and foster-parents of the claimant, it was held that a specific performance of the contract should be granted, and a judgment granting such relief was entered in this court. In the discussion of this case by the writer of the opinion, authorities bearing on the question at issue from other jurisdictions were examined at considerable length. This might properly excuse us from a reexamination of the authorities commented upon in the opinion, were it not for the fact that it is contended by counsel for the collateral heirs that this decision was chiefly influenced by the holding of the supreme court of Michigan in the case of *Wright v. Wright*, 99 Mich. 170, 58 N. W. 54, and that this decision has been overruled by the subsequent holdings of the Michigan court in *Albring v. Ward*, 137 Mich. 352, 100 N. W. 609, and *Bowins v. English*, 138 Mich. 178, 101 N. W. 204.

In suits of this character the relief granted necessarily depends on the facts and circumstances surrounding each particular case. While certain general principles are applied, yet the application of these principles to a particular case depends on its special environment. While we do not concede, because of different conditions surrounding the cases, that the conclusion reached in *Kofka v. Rosicky, supra*, was necessarily influenced by the decision in *Wright v. Wright, supra*, yet, because this contention is strongly urged by defendants, we have reexamined the latter case, as well as the cases in which it is said to have been overruled. As a result of our investigation, we find that in the case of *Wright v. Wright, supra*, the plaintiff, when about two years old, was indentured or bound to his foster-parents until he was 21 years of age, and it appears from the statement made in the dissenting opinion that there was no contract in this indenture that the child should inherit as an heir of the persons to whom he was bound. It further appears that afterwards the foster-parents under an unconstitutional

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statute attempted to legally adopt the child as their heir. It also appears that the child lived with the parents, and after his attempted adoption took their name and conducted himself as a dutiful son toward them until the death of the adoptive father; that from the time of the adoption the father regarded him as his son, spoke of him as such, and desired that he should inherit his estate. The majority opinion of the court was written by Long, J., and directed a specific performance of the contract. Grant, J., concurred in the decision in a separate opinion. Hooker, J., dissented, placing his dissent on the proposition that no contract was proved in which the deceased had agreed to make plaintiff his heir, that the right of heirship depended on the legality of the adoption, and that, as the statute providing for the adoption was unconstitutional, the pretended adoption was a mere nullity, that the contract of indenture made no provision for the heirship of plaintiff and was the only contract that was proved, and that the subsequent oral promises of the foster-father to make plaintiff his heir were without consideration and constituted a mere *nudum pactum*. This dissenting opinion was concurred in by Montgomery, J. It will be noticed that in this decision there is nothing, even in the dissenting opinion, that makes against the conclusion reached in *Kofka v. Rosicky, supra*. In *Albring v. Ward, supra*, the only contract attempted to be proved was an abortive attempt on the part of the foster-parents to adopt a child under an unconstitutional statute of Michigan. Grant, J., rendered the opinion in the case and distinguished the facts from the facts commented upon in his concurring opinion in *Wright v. Wright, supra*. He did say, however, that, if it was understood by the profession from the language of Judge Long in *Wright v. Wright* that void articles of adoption can afford the basis of a contract of heirship, it should, in his judgment, be overruled. In other words, he simply holds that something more must be established than mere void articles of adoption to entitle a foster-child to recover as

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an heir. The opinion in *Bowins v. English, supra*, was also written by Grant, J., and depended on the construction of a written contract made between the father of the claimant and her foster-parents. It was determined that by the terms of this contract the deceased never agreed to either adopt the child or to make her his heir. While the natural father of the child agreed that she might be adopted and have her name changed by the legislature, if the foster-parents so desired, there was no agreement on the part of the deceased that he would do so. And while the child lived with the foster-parents, her name was never changed nor was she ever adopted, although she was provided for by the will of the foster-mother, and was also provided for by gifts from the foster-father. Under these circumstances, the court held that there was no equity in her bill for specific performance of a contract that deceased had never entered into.

We are also cited by the defendants to the holding of the supreme court of the state of Missouri in *Davis v. Hendricks*, 99 Mo. 478, 12 S. W. 887, as tending to support the judgment of the trial court in the instant suit. In this case the facts were that the child was taken by the foster-parents under an agreement with the natural father that they would make her their heir. There was some written agreement to this effect that appears to have been entered into, but was not produced at the trial. The foster-parents subsequently completed the adoption of the child by act of the legislature of the state of Missouri, and had her name legally changed to that of the foster-parents. She was raised, educated, and cared for as a child of the foster-parents. She was also provided for, with other legatees, in the will of the foster-father. She brought her suit asking for a specific performance of the contract of adoption, by which she claimed she was entitled to inherit the entire estate of the deceased. The contest was between the claimant and the legatees of the will of the deceased, and the court, in disposing of the case, said:

"The strongest case made by the evidence for the

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plaintiffs is that McCormick agreed to adopt the child and make her his heir. Such an agreement falls far short of the one alleged, namely, that he agreed to grant and devise to her all his property at his death. The proved agreement only places the adopted child in the position of a natural child."

We think this decision, in so far as it holds that the agreement proved gave the plaintiff the rights of heirship as a natural child, makes against rather than for the decision rendered by the learned trial judge in the case at bar. For if, under that decision, the deceased and his wife had died intestate, plaintiff, under her contract of adoption, would have taken the entire estate.

In this connection, our attention is called by plaintiff to a later decision of the supreme court of the state of Missouri in the case of *Healey v. Simpson*, 113 Mo. 340, 20 S. W. 881, in which the facts and circumstances surrounding the contract of adoption are very similar to those of the instant suit. In this later case the foster-parents entered into a contract with the parents of the child in the state of Ohio, by which they agreed to adopt the child, and in which it was further agreed, "that said Evangeline Brewster shall have and inherit from the estate of said parties of the second part in the same manner and to the same extent that a child born of their union would inherit." After entering into this contract, the foster-parents removed to the state of Missouri, took the child with them, gave her their name, and treated her in all respects as their own child. The child, after coming to maturity, married, and later, in 1883, died, leaving three children of the marriage surviving her. The foster-father procured a divorce from his wife and remarried, and died intestate in 1886, leaving his second wife surviving him. The children of Evangeline Brewster brought an action, in which they prayed for a decree establishing their rights under the contract of adoption entered into for the benefit of their mother, and declaring them to be the heirs at law, and as such entitled to the estate. The lower court

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sustained a demurrer to plaintiff's evidence, which judgment, on review, was reversed in the supreme court in an opinion wherein it was said: "The instrument of writing in question cannot operate as an adoption, as it did not come up to legal requirements, but it can operate as a contract for adoption, which may, upon a proper showing, be specifically enforced in equity." The agreement in this case was the same in substance as that contained in the contract now alleged upon.

As against these authorities it is of no avail to suggest that, notwithstanding the existence of the contract sued upon, the deceased could have disposed of his property as he pleased during his lifetime, by deed, devise, or otherwise. It is true that he might have done so, and also true that he did not. The deceased plainly lived up to both the letter and spirit of the contract in every particular, and died in the belief that its conditions would be carried out as he desired they should be. And we think there is no reason in equity and conscience why a decree of specific performance of this contract should not be granted.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to enter a decree as prayed for in the petition.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to enter a decree as prayed for in the petition.

**REVERSED.**

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Rohrbough v. Douglas County.

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**M. G. ROHRBOUGH ET AL., APPELLEES, V. DOUGLAS COUNTY,  
APPELLANT.**

**FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,583.**

1. **Taxation: Exemptions.** A commercial college, teaching such branches as arithmetic, reading, penmanship, spelling, bookkeeping, geography, history, etc., is a school within the meaning of section 13, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1905.
2. **School Property: Assessment.** In assessing property for taxation, which is used partly for school purposes and partly for purposes not exempt from taxation, the value of the part of the property used exclusively for school purposes should be deducted from the total value of the entire property.

**APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
HOWARD KENNEDY, JR., JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

**W. W. Slabaugh, F. W. Fitch and F. A. Shotwell, for  
appellant.**

***Benjamin S. Baker, contra.***

**OLDHAM, C.**

This was an appeal from the board of equalization of Douglas county in the matter of the assessment of certain property situated in Omaha, and used by the owners thereof mainly as a commercial college, known as the "Rohrbough Commercial College." The appeal was tried in the district court on the following stipulation of facts: "It is hereby stipulated by and between the parties in the above entitled action that lot 5, in block 115, in the city of Omaha, Nebraska, and the building thereon, is the property of M. G. and G. A. Rohrbough. It is further stipulated that all of said real estate is used exclusively for commercial college purposes, as shown by exhibit A of the petition, except the east room in the basement and the third story in said building, which said basement room and said third story are rented by the said Rohrboughs for

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commercial purposes. It is further stipulated and agreed by and between the parties in the above entitled action that said basement room and the said third story constituted 17½ per cent. of the whole value of said real estate, and that the remaining 82½ per cent. in value of said real estate represented by the balance of the basement story, the first, second and fourth stories of said building are used by the plaintiffs exclusively for commercial college purposes, as shown by exhibit A of the petition. It is further stipulated by and between the parties that plaintiffs own the said property, and that it was used exclusively for commercial college purposes as shown by exhibit A of the petition to the extent of 82½ per cent. of its value at and prior to the time of the assessment made by said county, of which assessment the plaintiffs bring complaint. Assessor's valuation \$14,000; assessed valuation \$2,800." Exhibit A, referred to in the stipulation, is the course of study taught in the institution, consisting of such branches as arithmetic, penmanship, reading, grammar, history, bookkeeping, shorthand, typewriting, French, Spanish, and German language, etc. This exhibit also shows the tuition charged for instruction in the various branches of study. On this stipulation of facts the court found that at the time of the assessment all of the premises, except the east room in the basement and the third story of the building, was and is used exclusively for school purposes, and is exempt from taxation; that the value of the premises exclusively used for school purposes is 82½ per cent. of the whole of the lot in dispute; and that the school conducted in the premises produces an income from tuition fees and is conducted in part for private gain. On these findings the court reduced the amount of the assessment 82½ per cent., the agreed proportionate value used exclusively for school purposes. To reverse this judgment the county appeals to this court.

Section 2 of article 9 of the constitution of Nebraska empowers the legislature to exempt from taxation the property of the state, counties, and municipal corpora-

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tions, both real and personal, and such other property as may be exclusively used for agricultural and horticultural societies, for schools, religious, cemetery, and charitable purposes. Under the authority so conferred, the legislature enacted section 13, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St., which exempted from taxation—First, all property of the state, counties, and municipal corporations. Second, such other property as may be used exclusively for agricultural and horticultural societies, for schools, religious, cemetery, and other charitable purposes.

It will be noticed that neither the constitution, nor the statute passed in furtherance of its provisions, makes any reference to schools conducted for gain, or to public as distinguished from private schools. Consequently, cases cited in the brief of the county attorney from states whose constitutions or statutes contain this limitation on the exemption lend little assistance in determining the question at issue, and it seems to us unnecessary to go beyond the construction of our own statute by this court to determine whether or not a commercial college, teaching the branches enumerated in exhibit A of the petition, is a school within the meaning of the exemption. In *Omaha Medical College v. Rush*, 22 Neb. 449, it was said that "the word 'school' in section 2, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. means an institution of learning, and is not limited to the lower grades of schools." In this case it was determined that a medical college was a school within the meaning of the statute. In *Academy of the Sacred Heart v. Irey*, 51 Neb. 572, the entire property was used for educational purposes, and it was held to be all exempt from taxation. In *Scott v. Society of Russian Israclites*, 59 Neb. 572, it was determined that it was the use and not the ownership of the property that exempted it from taxation. In *Watson v. Cowles*, 61 Neb. 216, the property was used as a commercial college, and it was held that during the years in which it was exclusively used for commercial college purposes it was not subject to taxation. In these several decisions it has been determined that a medical college,

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the Academy of the Sacred Heart, and a commercial college are all schools within the meaning of the exemption of our statute, and that where buildings and grounds are used exclusively for these purposes they are exempt from taxation.

The question not covered by these decisions is as to the right to a proportionate exemption in property used partly for exempt and partly for other purposes. This question was before this court in the case of *Young Men's Christian Ass'n v. Douglas County*, 60 Neb. 642. Here a part of the building was used for charitable, educational and religious purposes and a part for commercial purposes, and it was held that the part of the building used for commercial purposes was subject to taxation; and in reaching this conclusion, it was said: "We do not desire to be understood as holding that all of the property mentioned in the petition of appellant is subject to taxation, but only that part which was used for other than the purposes contemplated by the organization maintained by appellant."

We think these decisions fully support the judgment of the trial court, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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GEORGE A. ADAMS, ADMINISTRATOR, ET AL., APPELLEES, V.  
SAMUEL J. DENNIS, SPECIAL ADMINISTRATOR, ET AL.,  
APPELLANTS.

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,287.

1. **Trusts: Jurisdiction.** The district courts of this state have jurisdiction in cases involving the ownership of property held in trust, though in the possession of and claimed by the administrator of the estate of a deceased person.

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2. **Deeds: VALIDITY.** "A deed to real estate, executed, acknowledged, and delivered by the grantor, is valid as between the parties thereto and those having knowledge of its existence, although the conveyance be not witnessed." *Pearson v. Davis*, 41 Neb. 608.
3. **Witness: COMPETENCY.** A husband is a competent witness in behalf of his wife in an action brought by her in equity to establish the ownership to property claimed by her and held in trust by the administrator of his mother's estate, he having no direct interest adverse to the administrator.
4. **Evidence examined, and held to sustain the allegations of the plaintiff's petition by a preponderance of the evidence.**

**APPEAL from the district court for Pawnee county:  
ALBERT H. BABCOCK, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*A. J. Sawyer, Claude S. Wilson and L. C. Burr, for appellants.*

*George A. Adams, Stewart & Munger and John B. Raper, contra.*

**EPPERSON, C.**

This is an appeal from the district court for Pawnee county. The record discloses that in an early day one Mary A. Bentley and her husband located on a farm in that county, the title to the land being in the name of the said Mary A. Bentley. These parties had no children of their own, but in 1868 legally adopted a boy, then six weeks old, and gave him the name of William A. Bentley. The adopted son lived with his parents for more than 18 years. On the 9th day of September, 1900, he was married to the plaintiff in this case, Gertrude Bentley. Plaintiff claimed to be the owner of the land above mentioned through a conveyance from Mary A. Bentley and brought this action against the defendant Jun, and others, to have declared fraudulent as to her a conveyance of the land by Mary A. Bentley to Jun, and to have a note and mortgage taken in part payment of the land declared to be the property of the plaintiff, and also for a foreclosure of the mortgage.

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On the day of the son's marriage to plaintiff, they visited the mother at her home in Lincoln. The evidence discloses that the mother was well pleased with the son's marriage to plaintiff, and that she was on friendly and intimate terms with them until they departed from Nebraska eight months later. About two weeks after their marriage the son again visited his mother. He testified that at this time she handed him a warranty deed to her farm in Pawnee county, naming plaintiff as grantee therein, and told him to give it to his wife, the plaintiff herein, as a wedding present, but not to record it until after the mother's death. The deed, at this time, was signed by Mary A. Bentley and acknowledged, but not witnessed. When the son examined the instrument, he observed that it was not attested and called his mother's attention to that fact, and thereupon she requested him to sign it as a witness. After witnessing the deed he took it to Omaha and gave it to his wife, who retained possession of it until the trial in the court below. The notary before whom the deed appears to have been acknowledged testified that he was acquainted with Mary A. Bentley, that he signed the acknowledgment, that Mrs. Bentley was in his office to transact some business, and to the best of his recollection it must have been the acknowledgment of this deed. Two disinterested witnesses corroborated the notary as to the acknowledgment of the deed by Mrs. Bentley. About a month after the marriage Mary A. Bentley visited her son and daughter-in-law in Omaha and remained in their home for about a week. While there she made statements to several witnesses to the effect that she had given the farm to Gertrude Bentley as a wedding present. Soon after the mother's visit to Omaha the plaintiff and her husband came to Lincoln and lived with her until April 9, 1901, when they moved to Oklahoma. When Bentley and his wife were thus living with his mother, she went to Pawnee City, and, while there, without the knowledge or consent of plaintiff, sold her farm to the defendant Jun, receiving \$1,000 in cash and two notes,

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one for \$1,100 and the other for \$3,000, the latter secured by a mortgage on the land. The son testified that, when his mother returned to Lincoln with the proceeds from the sale of the farm, she promised to and did turn over to his wife the notes, money and mortgage. His testimony is corroborated to some extent by other facts appearing in the record. Mary A. Bentley died May 28, 1901, and Dennis, the special administrator of her estate, appears as a party defendant herein. The district court found for the plaintiff, and decreed that she was the owner of the note and mortgage in controversy, and that the defendants had no right, title or interest therein. Since the decree was entered in the court below, plaintiff departed this life, and the action was revived in the name of her administrator, George A. Adams. Appellants advance several reasons for a reversal of the judgment

1. The first point argued is that the district court for Pawnee county was without jurisdiction to try and determine this cause. Mary A. Bentley's home at the time of her death was in Lancaster county; and at the time this suit was instituted proceedings for the administration of her estate were pending in the probate court of that county. It is argued by defendants that, as the county court has original jurisdiction of all matters of probate and the settlement of the estates of deceased persons, this matter was exclusively within the jurisdiction of that court. This is not an action upon debt, nor an obligation of the deceased, nor otherwise involving the settlement of the estate of Mary A. Bentley, but is an action to determine the ownership of securities and a trust fund, and to foreclose a mortgage of which plaintiff claims to be the equitable owner. The mere fact that the special administrator of Mary A. Bentley contends that her estate is the owner thereof does not bring the matter within the exclusive jurisdiction of the county court. The special administrator, made defendant herein, was in possession of the notes and mortgage in controversy, which it is claimed belonged to the plaintiff, and not to the deceased.

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Plaintiff's cause of action would have existed against anyone in possession. In *Coleman v. McGrew*, 71 Neb. 801, the court had under consideration a question involving the disposition of trust funds in the hands of an administrator, which funds were claimed by a party to the suit and also by the administrator. OLDHAM, C., in the opinion says:

"If these funds are assets of the estate, and liable for the debts of the deceased, then plaintiffs could not maintain this cause of action, for want of a present interest in the funds; but, if these funds are held in trust by the executor for the plaintiffs, their interest is immediate and the capacity to sue clearly exists. \* \* \* This (defendant's) objection is based upon the proposition that the county court has sole and exclusive jurisdiction of probate matters; but, if we are correct in the conclusion already reached, the question involved has no connection with the proceedings connected with the probate of the will of the deceased. It is simply an application by the *cestui que trust* to a court of equity for an order restraining the trustee from misappropriation of his trust funds, and the jurisdiction of a court of equity to grant this relief is grounded on the fundamental principles of equity jurisprudence."

We cannot present a better reason for overruling this contention of the defendants.

Another suggestion made by defendants on this point is that the district court for Pawnee county had no jurisdiction because, when this suit was instituted, there was pending in the county court of Lancaster county against the estate of Mary A. Bentley the petition and claim of the plaintiff herein, in which she alleged substantially the above facts and asked that the special administrator be required by the court to deliver to her the trust property. Such proceedings were admitted by the plaintiff, but it appears that the claim in the county court was withdrawn before the trial of this cause and that action dismissed without prejudice. Defendants in their brief refer to the

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facts, but do not claim that the proceedings in the county court constituted a bar to this action; and we are of opinion that such proceedings did not deprive the district court of jurisdiction.

2. It is next urged that the deed from Mary A. Bentley to the plaintiff was void because not attested by a competent witness. As hereinbefore stated, the deed, when handed to Bentley, was not attested, but, on the suggestion of the grantor, he affixed his name thereto as a witness. The title of the defendant Jun under his subsequent deed is not assailed in this action, and it is unnecessary to discuss the competency of the grantee's husband to attest the execution of the deed. The rule that as between the parties a deed is valid although not witnessed has been followed in many decisions of this court. *Missouri Valley Land Co. v. Bushnell*, 11 Neb. 192; *Pearson v. Davis*, 41 Neb. 608; *Holmes v. Hull*, 50 Neb. 656; *Prout v. Burke*, 51 Neb. 24. We shall not digress for the benefit of the defendants in this case. Defendants cite *Child v. Baker*, 24 Neb. 188, which, however, is not in point. The deed there considered was acknowledged before a notary public who was the purchaser and the only attesting witness.

3. The testimony of the plaintiff's husband was necessary to enable the plaintiff to recover. Defendants contend that under section 329 of the code he was an incompetent witness, for the reason that the special administrator was an adverse party within the meaning of the law. Section 329 of the code provides: "No person having a direct legal interest in the result of any civil action or proceeding, when the adverse party is the representative of a deceased person, shall be permitted to testify to any transaction or conversation had between the deceased person and the witness," etc. Plaintiff's husband was his foster-mother's sole heir, and, as such, possessed an interest contingent upon the probate of a will which had been offered, but not yet admitted to probate. Under the proposed will the plaintiff's husband would have a small interest as legatee — \$25. This amounted practically to a disinheritance.

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But, whether his interest be that of legatee or heir, it is not adverse to the special administrator. Such an interest would be furthered by the special administrator's success and dependent thereon. In *Parker v. Wells*, 68 Neb. 647, it is said: "A wife may testify in favor of her husband in relation to conversations and transactions \* \* \* except where the result of the suit, if favorable to the husband, would invest her with some direct legal interest in the subject of the controversy." See also *Hagaman v. Estate of Powell*, *ante*, p. 514. The plaintiff's success in this action would vest in her certain personal property or money in which her husband would have no direct legal interest, and the evidence admitted, under the circumstances existing at the time of the trial, was competent, and the trial court properly so held.

4. It is earnestly contended by defendants that the evidence fails to establish the alleged gift of the notes and mortgage by Mary A. Bentley to the plaintiff. The testimony of the plaintiff and her husband is to the effect that the notes and mortgage were given to the plaintiff, who took charge of the same and deposited them in a safety deposit vault or drawer in a local bank. This depository was procured for the use of the plaintiff, her husband, and his mother. Each had a key to the same. There the papers remained until a short time before the plaintiff and her husband moved to Oklahoma, when they were taken by the plaintiff and given into the possession of Mary A. Bentley, with the understanding that she was to collect a payment which was expected soon to be made, and, when so paid, she was to bring it to Oklahoma and join the plaintiff and her husband. Defendant's evidence discloses that on April 13, 1901, the notes and mortgage were deposited by Mary A. Bentley with a friend from whom the special administrator obtained them after the death of the said Mary A. Bentley. No written indorsements or assignment of the notes and mortgage were made. Such conduct between strangers would be of great weight in support of the theory that no gift of the securities had

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been made and no transfer of title effected, but such conduct is not unusual between members of the same family on friendly terms. If the gift of the land to the plaintiff was made as alleged we need not hold her to the same degree of proof as to the delivery of the notes and mortgage as otherwise we would be compelled to do. In such case she would be entitled to the securities as equitable owner in the absence of proof of an independent gift thereof to her by the donor.

Defendants further argue that there is inconsistency in the allegations of the petition that there was a gift of the farm, and, later, a gift of the notes and mortgage. We cannot see wherein there is inconsistency in these allegations. It is true that proof of one without proof of the other would be sufficient to entitle the plaintiff to recover, but both pertain to the same matter, and evidence of one would not disprove or discredit the other.

Defendants strongly contend that the evidence indicates that the plaintiff's deed was a forgery, and that the evidence is insufficient to prove a gift of the notes and mortgage. Had the plaintiff's case rested upon the testimony of the Bentleys there would be more reason for this contention. Even though we cannot find any inconsistency in their testimony and have no reason for discrediting their statements, still they testified concerning matters, many of which rest alone within their knowledge. The execution of plaintiff's deed, however, was acknowledged before a notary public, and if the plaintiff and her husband perpetrated a crime the notary was a party to it. This notary was a witness on the trial and related the transaction, not as it would probably be stated by a party to a crime, but as an ordinary honest business man would relate the facts of an every day occurrence. We would be convinced of the truthfulness of his testimony, even though it had not been corroborated, as it was, by two other disinterested witnesses. The deed having been acknowledged, delivery thereof was a natural sequence. Opposing the plaintiff's evidence on this point, we find

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the testimony of many expert witnesses who testify that, in their opinion, the signature to the plaintiff's deed was not the handwriting of Mary A. Bentley. Their evidence is conflicting in many details and is opposed by the opinions of two experts called by the plaintiff. Such evidence is not very satisfactory, and we cannot accept the opinions of these experts as against the evidence of the notary, the witnesses corroborating him, and the other facts appearing in the record sustaining the allegations of the plaintiff's petition.

Upon the trial plaintiff called several witnesses who testified to statements made by Mary A. Bentley to the effect that she had given her land to the plaintiff as a wedding present. Such evidence it is claimed by the defendants, was hearsay and incompetent. This opinion is already of considerable length, and a full discussion of this question is unnecessary. Such evidence was proof of admissions by deceased against interest and was competent.

A careful review of the record convinces us that the conclusion of the trial court was right, and we recommend that its judgment be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**JOHN M. SENNETT, APPELLEE, v. JAMES M. MELVILLE  
ET AL., APPELLANTS.**

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,309.

**Contracts: EVIDENCE.** To establish as a contract a proposition made by letter, proof of its acceptance is necessary.

**APPEAL from the district court for Custer county:  
BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. Reversed.**

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*J. S. Kirkpatrick and G. E. Hager, for appellants.*

*H. M. Sullivan, contra.*

EPPERSON, C.

Plaintiff instituted this suit in the district court for Custer county to require the specific performance of an alleged contract for the sale to him of 80 acres of land. The contract relied upon was made by correspondence transmitted through the mail between defendant and plaintiff. The first letter admitted in evidence bears date March 13, 1902, was written to plaintiff's agent and had defendant Melville's name signed thereto. The body of the letter is as follows: "Your favor of Mch. 11th received, contents noted. Will send deed and abstract as soon as I can get abstract from Broken Bow, Nebr." There is no evidence as to the contents of the letter to Melville of date March 11, to which the above purports to be an answer. The initial letter of this correspondence was written by plaintiff to Melville, and is shown by secondary evidence to have contained a proposal to pay \$500 for the land in controversy, a part in cash, and a part at some future time secured by mortgage. The proposition therein made was not accepted, nor did the plaintiff rely upon the same as the basis of this action. In answer to this first letter defendant refused the proposition therein made, and submitted another proposition or made some answer as to the nature of which no evidence was given. Following the letter quoted, we find the following letter by defendant to plaintiff's agent, F. D. Brown:

"Sterling, Neb., Mch. 25, 1902. F. D. Brown, cashier, Miller, Neb. Dear sir: I inclose you herewith deed and abstract for the N. half, S. W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  sec. 22-13-18. \* \* \* When Mr. Sennett pays you \$500, plus exchange, kindly deliver these papers to him, and send me draft for \$500 at Sterling, Neb. Yours very truly, J. H. Melville."

Secondary evidence was given showing that plaintiff

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returned the abstract, with a letter calling defendant's attention to what he supposed was a cloud upon the title and requested him to procure a quitclaim deed from one Popple to cure the defect. On April 2, 1902, defendant wrote the following to plaintiff's agent:

"Sterling, Neb., Apr. 2, 1902. S. D. Brown, Esq. Miller, Neb. Dear sir: Replying to your favor of Mch. 31, I have given the matter to my attorney, who will have everything fixed up as soon as possible. Yours very truly, J. H. Melville."

August 29, 1902, defendant wrote again to the agent saying that Popple would not give a quitclaim deed, and contended that the same was unnecessary, concluding his letter as follows: "If Mr Sennett thinks the title not good you had better return the deed to me, but if he wants to take it as it is we will return you the abstract so the deal can be closed at once."

Defendant contends that the secondary evidence above referred to was erroneously admitted. We cannot see that it is prejudicial, and therefore refrain from discussing that question. Such evidence as to plaintiff's answer to the letter of March 25, 1902, was sufficient proof that the proposition therein contained was not then accepted. This was not prejudicial to him.

It is also contended that the letters above quoted or referred to were not sufficiently identified to permit their admission in evidence. The proof showed that defendant resided at Sterling when the correspondence began; that the letters admitted were received in answer to letters written to him by plaintiff's agent. The letters purport to have been written at Sterling, but the evidence does not show that they were posted in Sterling, nor that the letters they purport to answer were addressed to Sterling. There was no testimony given that the letters were in the handwriting of defendant, nor that he either wrote, dictated or authorized the same. The admission of such evidence was objected to by the defendant, and it may be questioned under the rule in *Gartrell v. Stafford*, 12 Neb. 545, whether

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it was competent, but, even if considered as competent evidence, still there is a failure of proof. The proof fails to show that plaintiff ever accepted the proposition made in the letter of March 25, 1902, or in the letter of August 29, 1902. No tender of the purchase price was made, but the agent to whom the deed was forwarded retained it, even though the defendant several times demanded its return. Plaintiff did have a fund on deposit, subject to his check, in the First Bank of Miller, of which his agent Brown was cashier. The bank had agreed to loan him the amount needed to consummate the purchase of the land, but he never complied with the conditions necessary to entitle him to the possession of the deed, nor is there proof that he ever indicated his intention to purchase under the proposition made in defendant's letters.

In his petition plaintiff alleged that he accepted the proposition made in the letter of August 29. No evidence was offered in support of this allegation, which was denied by the answer. On account of the absence of evidence as to the contents of the letters written by plaintiff, these allegations of the petition and the judgment of the trial court are not supported by sufficient evidence to show the acceptance of defendant's offer to sell. It is a well-established rule that a proposition to sell real estate made by letter may be enforced, if accepted. Proof of the acceptance is as essential as proof of the proposition. *Mellick v. Kelley*, 53 Neb. 509. And at any time before its acceptance, no time being fixed, the proposition may be withdrawn.

Plaintiff contends that by delivery of the deed to his agent Brown the title vested in plaintiff. This is somewhat inconsistent with the petition, wherein plaintiff prays for specific performance of the contract, which by this contention he claims has been fully performed. It is true that Brown was plaintiff's agent for the purpose of corresponding with the defendant, but the defendant, by entrusting to Brown the deed in controversy with the request that he deliver the same to the plaintiff upon the payment of the purchase price, thereby made Brown his agent for that

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purpose, and Brown had no authority to deliver the deed to the plaintiff until the proposition was accepted and the purchase price in his hands with authority to pay the same to the defendant.

The judgment of the trial court in favor of the plaintiff is not supported by the evidence, and we recommend that it be reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

AMES and OLDFHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause is remanded for a new trial.

**REVERSED.**

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**PULLMAN PALACE CAR COMPANY v. CLARKE P. WOODS.**

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,236.

1. **Evidence of Value: HARMLESS ERROR.** Where both competent and incompetent evidence is received as to the value of property, the latter placing the valuation no higher than the former, and neither is contradicted, and the value as found by the jury is less than that warranted by the competent testimony, the admission of the incompetent evidence is harmless error.
2. **Harmless Error.** Where a litigant relies upon the common law of a sister state, he is not prejudiced by the rejection of evidence to prove such law, where the court embodies such law in an instruction to the jury as a part of the law of the case.
3. **Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the verdict.**

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county:  
**EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*F. T. Ransom and Robert Ryan, for plaintiff in error.*

*S. B. Pound, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

The plaintiff brought this action against the Pullman Palace Car Company to recover for the loss of certain

jewelry and money, which she alleges were stolen from her person while asleep in a berth on one of the defendant's cars in which she was traveling as a passenger in the state of Pennsylvania. She alleges that the loss was due to the negligent omission of the defendant to take due precautions to protect the property of its passengers from theft. The loss of the property and the amount of damages, if any loss occurred, are put in issue by the answer, which also contains the following allegations: "Defendant further alleges that the contract between the plaintiff and the defendant, whereby defendant was to furnish the plaintiff with a berth and accommodations in the car mentioned in the petition, was made in the state of Pennsylvania, and is to be construed according to the laws of that state, and the rights, duties and liabilities of the parties to each other under such contract are to be governed and determined by the laws of the state of Pennsylvania, and that under the laws of the state of Pennsylvania the defendant's liability to the plaintiff for the alleged loss of her jewelry depends upon whether the defendant used due care and caution to guard against said property of plaintiff being stolen or lost while she occupied the said berth, and defendant alleges that it used due care and caution, and therefore is not liable to plaintiff in this action." The jury found for the plaintiff and awarded \$507.15 damages. The defendant brings error.

The principal question now presented is whether the verdict is sustained by sufficient evidence; the defendant contending that the evidence is wholly insufficient to sustain the finding that the jewelry and money were stolen from the plaintiff as alleged in her petition. The testimony of the plaintiff as to the alleged loss is to the effect that she and her husband were passengers on one of the defendant's cars on the night of the alleged loss, and occupied the same berth. Among other articles of personal adornment she carried with her two solitaire diamond rings, the stone in one weighing  $1\frac{1}{4}$  carats, in the other 1 carat; a turquoise ring, with a circle of diamonds; a ring

set with an emerald, surrounded by a circle consisting of ten small diamonds, and a ring containing three large opals. Before retiring she placed the five rings and a \$5 bill in a small bag at the end of a long strip of chamois skin, which was wound around it and securely tied, and pinned the bag to the inside of her undervest, next to her person, by means of two belt pins about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length. The undervest was low-cut, and the chamois-skin bag was pinned near the top of the vest. Over this vest she wore a nightgown, which was also low-cut in front like the undervest. She retired about 10 o'clock. Her husband retired about midnight. He was ill and feverish, and after he had been in the berth about an hour wanted some water, and rang the bell repeatedly for the porter, but could get no response. The conductor, who was produced as a witness on behalf of the defendant, testified that all the bells were in good working order, and, if rung, would have been heard by himself or the porter, if in the car. The plaintiff further testified that as her husband was unable to raise the conductor or porter by ringing the bell, she got up, went to the end of the car, procured water for him there, and returned with it to the berth. She also testified, that, upon leaving the berth, she looked up and down the aisle, that there was no person in sight, and that she saw no one in the aisle or in the car, either coming or going. When she had returned with the water, and again retired, the chamois-skin bag with the jewelry was still on her person, and the curtains of the berth were fastened. Her husband testified that when he retired, which was about midnight, there was none of the employees of the company in sight. He got up in the morning sometime before his wife, but did not touch the curtains at the head of the berth. The wife testified that when she got up, shortly afterwards, the curtains at the head of the bed were unbuttoned, and that the chamois-skin bag containing the rings and money had been removed from her person. She immediately reported her loss to the defendant's employees, but the property was never

recovered. That the plaintiff had the property in her possession when she retired, that she had secured it in the manner stated by her in her testimony, that it was still on her person after procuring the water for her husband, that afterwards, and before she arose in the morning, it was removed from her person and was never recovered, are facts which stand uncontradicted by any direct evidence. Taking into account the way the property was carried and secured, that it was designedly removed by some human agency, and not lost by mere accident, is, to say the least, a reasonable inference.

But the defendant contends that the plaintiff's story of the loss is so improbable as to be unworthy of credit. It is true the plaintiff had secured her property in such a way as to render its removal without her knowledge extremely difficult, and that the thief attempting it would take great risk of being detected in the act. But we are not prepared to say that her story is so inherently improbable as to warrant this court in holding, as a matter of law, that it should be utterly disregarded. She had slept none when her husband retired about midnight. Owing to his illness she was awake for some time afterwards. The evidence shows that she was accustomed to travel and to sleeping in sleeping cars. Hence we should expect that when she did get to sleep on the night in question she slept soundly. She was a married woman, sleeping by the side of her husband. Consequently it is not surprising that the slight touch necessary to remove the property from her person failed to arouse her from her sleep. Besides, instances are not wanting of larceny from the person of property as safely secured and guarded as was this. In *Pullman Palace Car Co. v. Hunter*, 107 Ky. 519, 47 L. R. A. 286, the plaintiff's claim that three rings were stolen from her finger while she slept was credited. In *Lewis v. New York Sleeping Car Co.*, 143 Mass. 267, money sewed up in the pocket of a vest, which had been rolled up and placed under the sleeper's head, was stolen by cutting a slit in the vest and drawing out the purse, leaving the vest in its place. In

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*Pullman Palace Car Co. v. Martin*, 95 Ga. 314, 29 L. R. A. 498, jewelry was stolen from a satchel which had been placed on the inside of the berth, while the owner slept on the outside. In the light of everyday experience, it would be rash to attempt to set a limit upon the dexterity of the professional thief. Counsel urge upon our attention the risk a thief would incur in attempting to extract the bag of jewelry from where the plaintiff in this case had placed it, but, as their opponents justly observe, if thefts were confined merely to cases where no risk is involved larceny would be a thing of the past. It is true there are some circumstances shown in evidence that might be held to discredit to some extent the testimony of the plaintiff and her husband. But both of them testified in open court. The jury had an opportunity to observe their conduct and demeanor on the stand, their apparent candor and fairness or the lack of these qualities, and in many ways were in a far better position than we to judge of the weight to be given to their account of the occurrence. With these advantages for weighing the evidence, they found the plaintiff's account of her loss to be true, and we do not think their finding in that regard should be disturbed.

It is also contended that the evidence is insufficient to sustain a finding that plaintiff's loss was occasioned by any negligent act on the part of the defendant. The measure of defendant's duty to the plaintiff as one of its passengers is to be found in the instruction hereinafter set out which stands as the law of this case. Tested by that instruction we think the evidence is sufficient to sustain a finding of negligence on the part of the defendant. In the first place, if the defendant had exercised the degree of care required by that instruction it is hardly possible that the loss could have occurred. In the next place, the evidence of the plaintiff's husband is to the effect that none of the employees of the defendant was in sight when he went to his berth at midnight. The evidence of both the plaintiff and her husband is that he repeatedly rang the bell, but obtained no response. According to the conductor's testi-

mony, if the porter or himself had been in the car at the time they would have heard the bell. This would indicate that the conductor and porter were absent from the car when the bell was rung. The testimony of the plaintiff further shows that, when she got up from the berth about 1 o'clock in the night to get water for her husband, she saw no one. Taking into account the testimony which we have just recounted, we think the jury were warranted in drawing the inference that the defendant failed to maintain a careful and continual watch over the interior of the cars while the berths were occupied by sleepers. To that extent, under the instruction referred to, it failed of its duty and was negligent, and the inference that plaintiff's loss was occasioned by such negligence is by no means unreasonable.

Complaint is made that a considerable amount of the testimony adduced on behalf of the plaintiff as to the value of the stolen property was incompetent. We are disposed to think there is some foundation for this complaint. But along with the incompetent evidence upon this point is a considerable amount that is competent, and which does not appear to have been contradicted. The incompetent evidence, if anything, places a little lower valuation on the property than the competent, and both place it higher than found by the jury. That being true, had all the incompetent evidence been excluded, the uncontradicted evidence would still have entitled the plaintiff to a verdict for a larger amount than the jury awarded. We are able therefore to see no way in which the defendant was prejudiced by the reception of the incompetent evidence.

The defendant offered in evidence a case decided by the supreme court of Pennsylvania, entitled *Pullman Car Co. v. Gardner*, 3 Penny. (Pa.) 78, and now complains that its offer was rejected. This evidence was offered in support of those allegations of the answer in regard to the laws of Pennsylvania, and as showing the degree of care required by sleeping car companies for the safety of their passengers.

in that state. It was offered upon the theory that, as the loss occurred in the state of Pennsylvania, the law of that state, rather than of this, would govern as to the defendant's liability. In the case offered in evidence the court, among other things, said: Conceding that the company is not liable in this action as an inn-keeper or common carrier, yet a reasonable and proper degree of care is imposed on the company. Whether it did exercise that degree of care under the circumstances was for the jury. The main object of taking passage in such a car is to permit the passenger to sleep. While in that helpless condition, a duty rests on the company to provide reasonable care and precaution against the valuables of a passenger being stolen from his bed or from the clothes on his person. This is not the case of a robbery by force and violence, but by stealthy larceny. Unless a watchman be kept constantly in view of the center aisle of the car, larceny from a sleeping passenger may be committed without the thief being detected in the act."

But in the case at bar the court instructed the jury as to the degree of care which the defendant owed to the plaintiff as one of its passengers, as follows: "It is the duty of a sleeping car company to use reasonable care to guard the baggage and personal effects which passengers have taken with them and retained in their custody in defendant's sleeping cars, and if, through a failure of defendant company to use such care, the baggage or property of such passenger is stolen, without any fault or negligence upon such passenger's part, then the company is liable therefor; and you are instructed that such reasonable care involves the duty on the part of the defendant company to maintain a careful and continual watch by a competent and efficient person for the safety of the baggage or property of its passengers while they are asleep in its cars at night." No complaint is made of this instruction by either party, and we must therefore accept it as the law of this case, and are not required to express any opinion as to its accuracy. A comparison of this instruction with

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the rule announced in the Pennsylvania case shows, we think, that quite as high a degree of care is exacted in that state as by the instruction which stands as the law of this case, and that what the defendant sought to prove by this evidence was given to the jury as a matter of law by the court. It is quite clear therefore that the defendant was not prejudiced by the exclusion of the evidence, and equally clear, we think, that, in view of the theory upon which the cause was submitted, the evidence was properly excluded.

The defendant also complains of the refusal of the court to give certain instructions tendered by it. The ground covered by the instructions tendered is adequately covered by the instructions given by the court on its own motion; consequently, the refusal to give those tendered was not error.

We find nothing in the record that would warrant a reversal of the judgment in this case, and we therefore recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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JAMES E. BARNEY V. GEORGE B. LASBURY ET AL.

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,262.

**Sale of Realty: CONTRACT.** Where a contract for the sale of real estate between the owner thereof and a broker employed to sell the same is void because not in writing, as required by section 74, ch. 73, Comp. St. 1905, the broker cannot recover on a *quantum meruit* for services rendered in accordance with such contract, nor for the value of his time expended in that behalf. *Blair v. Austin*, 71 Neb. 401, distinguished.

**ERROR to the district court for Sarpy county: ALEXANDER C. TROUP, JUDGE. Reversed.**

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Barney v. Lasbury.

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*O. C. Redick*, for plaintiff in error.

*John F. Stout and W. R. Patrick, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

This is an action on a *quantum meruit* to recover for time expended by the plaintiffs in procuring a purchaser for certain lands belonging to the defendant. After the allegations that the plaintiffs are engaged in the business of buying and selling lands and conductors of a general real estate business, and that the defendant is the owner of certain real estate in Sarpy county, the petition contains the following: "(3) That said defendant employed these plaintiffs to find and secure for her a purchaser for said land at a price fixed by said defendant. That said plaintiffs expended considerable time in finding a buyer for said land and on or about the 8th day of September, 1904, secured for said defendant a purchaser for said land at the price named and agreed by said defendant and these plaintiffs; and said defendant entered into an agreement with said purchaser to sell to him the said land at the price named, and said purchaser paid to said defendant a part of said purchase price. That said purchaser was able, ready and willing to pay the balance of said purchase money upon the delivery to him of a deed conveying the title to said real estate as promised and agreed by said defendant, but, notwithstanding the fact that said purchaser so found and secured by these plaintiffs was ready, able and willing to carry out his part of the contract to and pay to said defendant the agreed price for said land, said defendant has refused to carry out her part of the contract to convey to said purchaser the title to said above described real estate. (4) Said plaintiffs say that the time expended by them in securing for said defendant a purchaser for her said land, and in aiding and assisting the closing up of said deal was and is reasonably worth the sum of \$350. That said defendant has refused and now refuses to pay

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said plaintiffs for said time so expended by them in securing for her a purchaser for said land and there is now due said plaintiffs from said defendant the sum of \$350." A demurrer to the petition was interposed, which was overruled by the court, whereupon the defendant answered, denying that she ever employed the plaintiff to find a purchaser for the land. The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, and judgment went accordingly. The defendant prosecutes error.

We are satisfied that the demurrer should have been sustained. The alleged agreement was oral. Section 74, ch. 73, Comp. St. 1905, is as follows: "Every contract for the sale of lands, between the owner thereof and any broker or agent employed to sell the same, shall be void, unless the contract is in writing and subscribed by the owner of the land and the broker or agent, and such contract shall describe the land to be sold, and set forth the compensation to be allowed by the owner in case of sale by the broker or agent." The foregoing section has been before this court several times, and the uniform holding has been that there can be no recovery by a real estate agent or broker on a verbal contract for the sale of real estate. *Allen v. Hall*, 64 Neb. 256; *Spence v. Apley*, 4 Neb. (Unof.) 358; *Baker v. Gillan*, 68 Neb. 368; *Corey v. Henry*, 71 Neb. 118; *Danielson v. Goebel*, 71 Neb. 300. In *Blair v. Austin*, 71 Neb. 401, and *Rodenbrock v. Gress*, 74 Neb. 409, a recovery in each case was sought on a *quantum meruit* for services rendered by a broker to the owner of real estate in procuring a purchaser therefor, and the rule applicable thereto is thus stated in the head-note: "Services as a real estate broker, rendered for the owner of the land without a written contract, cannot be recovered for as such upon a *quantum meruit*." The present action, however, is grounded on the following, taken from the body of the opinion in the *Blair* case:

"In this case it does not seem possible that plaintiffs can have any recovery of commissions for making a sale. If they have incurred expenses in the transaction at

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defendant's request, and which have redounded to his benefit, they could doubtless recover for it as money laid out and expended for his benefit and at his request. If they have shown an absolute loss of time which could and would have been valuably employed, except for its use at defendant's request upon his employment, they could probably recover for that as time devoted to defendant's profit at his request, but for services as a broker in selling land, reckoned in percentage as commission, a written contract seems to be necessary under this statute."

The plaintiffs contend that, while the rule embodied in the head-note to that case would prevent a recovery for the reasonable value of their services as real estate brokers, the language taken from the body of the opinion authorizes a recovery for time expended for the defendant in their efforts to bring about a sale. In other words, that, while the express contract between themselves and the defendant is void under the statute, she is liable on an implied undertaking to pay them the reasonable value of the time they expended in her behalf in their efforts to find a purchaser for the land. This contention, we think, cannot be sustained. The object of the statute in question is well known, and is thus set forth in *Covey v. Henry, supra*:

"The reasons which impelled the legislature to pass that act are well known to the courts and the profession generally. Innumerable suits were being instituted, from time to time by agents and brokers, after the owners of land had sold the same, claiming a commission, on the ground that they had been instrumental in securing the purchaser; and, in many cases, owners of land were compelled to pay double commission on account of such claims. In order to prevent such disputes and protect property owners under just such cases as the one we are now considering, the legislature passed the act."

The fact that the statute requires the compensation to be set forth in the written contract is significant, and shows that the legislature had no intention of allowing a recovery on an implied contract. Nor do the plaintiffs escape the

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statute by seeking to recover for the reasonable value of the time expended instead of the reasonable value of their services as real estate brokers. The value of their time, of necessity, would be measured by the value of the services that could be rendered within that time by an ordinary person engaged in the same business. Hence, in whatever language the cause of action may be couched, for all practical purposes it is an action for compensation for services rendered as real estate brokers, and comes within the rule announced in the head-note to *Blair v. Auslin*, *supra*.

This conclusion in nowise conflicts with the quotation hereinbefore taken from the body of the opinion in that case. What is there meant is not that there could be a recovery for the loss of time expended in attempting to carry out the verbal contract by the broker, but that there might be a recovery for the time or money expended in accordance with specific directions of the owner of the land, as, for example, where the owner of the land specifically requests the broker to procure an abstract, advertise the land for sale, show it to a prospective purchaser, or the like. There is no doubt a recovery could be had for the time and money expended in carrying out such specific directions. But to hold that there could be a recovery for the time expended by the broker, generally, in attempting to bring about a sale of real estate in pursuance of a verbal contract between himself and the owner, would be to open the door to the very abuses the statute was enacted to prevent, and defeat its manifest purpose. Besides, in this case it is not claimed that the plaintiffs ever made any contract with the defendant in person. Their claim is that they were employed by a relative of the defendant, who appears to have had charge of the land, collecting the rents and so forth, and who was authorized to procure a purchaser and negotiate for a sale thereof on behalf of the defendant. His authority in the premises was in writing in the form of letters which he received from the defendant, and which the plaintiffs themselves introduced in evidence.

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There is nothing in the entire correspondence which could be construed into authority to this person to employ sub-agents to procure a purchaser for the land. On the contrary, in one letter the defendant expressly states that she wants nothing to do with real estate agents. This phase of the case is slighted in the brief, and a reference to it is made here only because of the recommendation which we intend to make. The petition fails to state a cause of action. The evidence wholly fails to show that the plaintiffs were ever employed by the defendant, or by any one authorized to act for her in the premises.

For these reasons, it is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

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JOSEPH HAUBER V. WILLIAM LEIBOLD.

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,352.

1. **Instructions.** A party is entitled to have the jury instructed with reference to his theory of the case, when such theory is presented and supported by competent evidence
2. **Contracts: COMPETENCY.** In order to make a valid contract the minds of the parties must meet; and if one mind is so weak, unsound or diseased that the party is incapable of understanding the nature and quality of the act to be performed, or its consequences, he is incompetent to make a valid contract, whether such state of his mind be the result of sickness, accident or voluntary intoxication. *Johnson v. Harmon*, 94 U. S. 371.

ERROR to the district court for Otoe county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*W. F. Moran and A. P. Moran, for plaintiff in error.*

*John C. Watson and L. F. Jackson, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

This action was brought to recover damages for breach of an alleged contract not to engage in business as a baker or confectioner in Nebraska City. The petition upon which the cause was tried alleges, in substance, that the plaintiff and defendant for a number of years had been associated together as partners under the firm name of Hauber & Leibold, and engaged in the bakery and confectionery business in that city, owning the stock in trade, fixtures and certain real estate; that on or about the 5th day of October, 1901, they entered into a contract in writing, whereby the defendant, for and in consideration of the sum of \$5,000 to be paid to him by the plaintiff, agreed to sell and convey his entire undivided interest in the firm and firm property, including the good-will belonging to the said business, to the plaintiff, and as a further consideration for the \$5,000 undertook and agreed that he would not, at any time, either as owner or employee, "set up, exercise or carry on the said trade or business of baker or confectioner within the said city of Nebraska City, or engage in opposition to the trade or business hereafter to be carried on by William Leibold, nor do anything to the prejudice thereof, so long as the said William Leibold is engaged in the bakery business for himself," and that for any violation of the stipulation against engaging in said business the defendant by the terms of said contract undertook to pay the sum of \$2,000 as liquidated damages. The petition also charges certain acts on the part of the defendant constituting a breach of said stipulation and consequent damage to the plaintiff.

The trial court in its charge to the jury, after stating the material allegations of the petition, instructed the jury with reference to the subsequent pleadings, giving the

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substance thereof, as follows: "Instruction No. 1. Paragraph 2. "To this petition the defendant answers, in substance, by first denying each and every allegation contained in said petition. Defendant, further answering, says that the pretended agreement set out in plaintiff's petition was not the real dissolution agreement between him and the plaintiff, but that the contract set out in plaintiff's petition was made and executed several days after the real dissolution took place, and the \$5,000 mentioned in said agreement was the agreed consideration for the actual property transferred by the defendant to the plaintiff, and no part thereof was received by this defendant in consideration of his not engaging in the bakery business, nor did he in the original dissolution agreement ever agree or promise not to reengage in said bakery business.

Defendant, further answering, says that, in order to cheat, wrong and defraud this defendant, the plaintiff wrongfully destroyed or secreted the original agreement of dissolution, and several days thereafter, and while this defendant was so intoxicated as not to be able to comprehend the nature of the business he was transacting, and through and by force of reason, threats and duress practiced upon this defendant, this defendant was forced to and did sign the alleged agreement set out in plaintiff's petition, and that there was no consideration whatever received by this defendant or paid by the plaintiff for the contract or agreement set out in plaintiff's petition. Defendant, further answering, says that the plaintiff's business has not in any manner been injured by reason of his engaging in the bakery business, and that the plaintiff has not been in any manner damaged thereby, and defendant prays that he may be dismissed from this action and recover his costs herein expended.

"Paragraph 3. To this answer the plaintiff has filed a general denial for reply."

Evidence was adduced on the part of the defendant tending to establish both affirmative defenses, namely: (1) That the contract in suit was made after the parties had

entered into a contract in writing in substantially the same terms, save that the original contract contained no stipulation against the defendant engaging in said business, and that there was no consideration for the second contract containing such provision; and (2) that at the time the contract in suit was made the defendant, owing to intoxication, lacked capacity to make a binding contract.

The following taken from the charge to the jury shows the theory upon which the trial court submitted the case:

"Instruction No. 3. The burden of proof is on the plaintiff in this case, and before he can recover he must prove by a preponderance of the evidence the following propositions: (1) That the alleged contract set up in his petition was signed at or about the time therein mentioned. (2) That a part of the \$5,000 given by plaintiff to the defendant was in consideration of defendant not again engaging in the bakery business in Nebraska City while the plaintiff was engaged in that business. (3) That defendant has engaged in the bakery business again in competition with plaintiff. (4) That plaintiff has been damaged in his business by reason of defendant engaging in the bakery business. (5) The amount of damages that plaintiff has sustained, if any."

"Instruction No. 4. If you believe the plaintiff has established each and all of the issues mentioned in the preceding instruction by a preponderance of the evidence, then before the defendant can avoid a judgment against him he must show by a preponderance of the evidence that said contract was signed by the defendant at a time when he was so intoxicated that he did not have sufficient mental ability to understand the nature of the contract he was entering into."

The defendant tendered, but the court refused to give, the following instruction: "You are instructed that one of the issues in this case is the consideration of the contract sued on in this case. You are instructed in this connection that if you find from the evidence that \$5,000 was the purchase price of defendant's interest in the partnership

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property, and that such sale was actual, agreed on and reduced to writing, and that said contract contained no inhibition against the defendant engaging in business in Nebraska City, Nebraska, and that there was no further consideration for the contract sued on in this case, and in case you so find from the evidence, you will return a verdict for the defendant." There was a verdict for the plaintiff and judgment went accordingly. The defendant brings error.

It is now contended that the court erred in refusing to give the instruction hereinbefore set out tendered by the defendant. We are of the opinion that this contention is well founded. The instruction tendered covers one theory of the defense, namely, that the contract in suit was made after the parties had already bound themselves by a valid contract in writing, and in substantially the same terms, save the stipulation against engaging in the same business in Nebraska City, and without any new or additional consideration for such stipulation. If this theory be established, and as before stated there is evidence tending to support it, the stipulation is without consideration and the defendant is not bound by it. It is well settled that a party to an action is entitled to have the jury instructed with reference to his theory of the case, when such theory is presented and supported by competent evidence. *Boice v. Palmer*, 55 Neb. 389, and authorities cited. It is the duty of the trial court to instruct the jury as to the issues. *Sanford v. Craig*, 52 Neb. 483; *Kyd v. Cook*, 56 Neb. 71, 71 Am. St. Rep. 661, and cases cited. The instructions hereinbefore set out are the only ones whereby the court undertook to state the issues and cover the theories of the respective parties, and it does not seem that they cover the defendant's theory of a want of consideration for the stipulation in question. We do not overlook the second paragraph of instruction No. 3, requiring the plaintiff to show by a preponderance of the evidence "that a part of the \$5,000 given by plaintiff to defendant was in consideration of defendant not again engaging in the bakery business,"

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but that, in our opinion, does not cover the ground. In the first place, it is not clear whether it refers to the contract in suit, or to what the defendant claims was the original and only valid contract between himself and the plaintiff. But in either case, the language could easily be construed by the jury as a license to interpret the contract, to place their own construction upon it, or to look beyond the writing and determine from facts and circumstances *aliunde* whether the defendant was bound to refrain from engaging in business in competition with the plaintiff. But, however this language of the court may have been construed by the jury, or for whatever purpose it was used by the court, it cannot be said to be a clear presentation of the defendant's theory of a want of consideration, and the instruction tendered covering that theory should have been given.

Complaint is made that the instruction as to the degree of drunkenness the defendant was required to prove to establish the defense of intoxication is too favorable to the plaintiff. We are inclined to think there is some ground for this complaint. The word "idiotic" used in this instruction is very elastic. According to Webster an idiot is a natural fool, or fool from his birth; a human being in form, but destitute of reason or the ordinary intellectual powers of man; a foolish person; one unwise. Bouvier says that idiocy is that condition of mind in which the reflective, or all, or a part, of the affected powers are either wanting or are manifested to the least possible extent. In *Owings' Case*, 1 Bland (Md.), 370, 17 Am. Dec. 311, it is defined as that condition in which a human creature has never had from birth any, or the least glimmering of reason, and is utterly destitute of all intellectual faculties in which man in general is so eminently and peculiarly distinguished. In *Clark v. Robinson*, 88 Ill. 498, the court, citing 1 Blackstone, Commentaries (Chitty's ed), \*302, \*304, said: "An idiot, or natural fool, is one that hath had no understanding from his nativity; and therefore is by law presumed never likely to obtain any." \* \* \* A man

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is not an idiot if he have any glimmering of reason, so that he can tell his parents, his age, or the like common matters." In *Bicknell v. Spear*, 77 N. Y. Supp. 920, the court defined an idiot as one having no power of mind whatever. Taking into account the connection in which the word idiotic is used in the instruction, and the various definitions thereof by eminent authorities, there is danger that the jury construed the instruction as imposing a greater burden upon the defendant than is warranted.

The courts are not quite in accord as to the degree of drunkenness that will incapacitate a person to bind himself by contract. The authorities are reviewed at some length in *Wright v. Walker*, 127 Ala. 557, 54 L. R. A. 440, the latter being copiously annotated. Of the numerous cases there cited *Johnson v. Harmon*, 94 U. S. 371, 24 L. ed. 271, states the rule which best commands itself to our judgment. It is as follows:

"Both minds must meet in such a transaction; and if one is so weak, unsound, and diseased that the party is incapable of understanding the nature and quality of the act to be performed, or its consequences, he is incompetent to assent to the terms and conditions of the instrument, whether that state of his mind was produced by mental or physical disease, and whether it resulted from ordinary sickness, or from accident, or from debauchery, or from habitual and protracted intemperance."

Measured by the foregoing rule the instruction in question is too favorable to the party seeking to enforce the contract. Whether the defendant is in a position to avail himself of the defense of intoxication as an independent defense is not raised, and for that reason is not considered.

For the reasons hereinbefore pointed out, it is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

**REVERSED.**

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**VAN DORN IRON WORKS COMPANY, APPELLEE, V. STATE  
OF NEBRASKA, APPELLANT.**

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,609.

**Contracts: Validity.** An appropriation by the legislature of \$80,000 for "240 steel cells and sewerage" for the penitentiary does not necessarily require that sewerage must be put in all cells contracted for, but leaves a discretion in the board of public lands and buildings so that a contract to construct the 240 cells will not be held void because it provides that six of such cells may be without sewerage.

APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:  
**EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE.** *Affirmed.*

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson,*  
for appellant.

**O. B. Polk, contra.**

**ALBERT, C.**

The petition filed by the plaintiff below (the appellee) is based on the following state of facts: By an act making appropriations for the current expenses of the state for the years ending March 31, 1904, and March 31, 1905, approved April 11, 1903, there were included certain items for the penitentiary, among which are the following: "For 240 steel cells and sewerage \$80,000." Laws 1903, ch. 160, p. 718. In pursuance of this appropriation, the board of public lands and buildings decided to construct 156 cells in the state penitentiary, and, after due notice to bidders, awarded the contract for the construction of such cells

to the plaintiff. The cells were constructed and accepted by the board of public lands and buildings, but the auditor rejected the claim for final payment under the contracts on the ground that the appropriation called for 240 cells, while the contract had been awarded for but 156. Thereupon the board decided to construct the remaining 84 cells, and, after due notice to bidders, awarded the contract therefor to the plaintiff, who undertook to construct the 84 cells for \$9,982. It appears from the argument that his bid was placed at that figure because that was all that remained of the appropriation, and he felt compelled to make some sacrifice in order to obtain payment of the balance due on his original contract. The 156 cells were placed in two tiers of 78 cells each. Of the 84 cells contemplated by the contract, 78 were to constitute a third tier. The remaining six were not really required and no precise location was provided for them. They were designated as "female and juvenile cells."

The second contract contains the following provision: "Each of the cells in the third story to have one standard improved cast iron enameled flush rim prison closet placed underneath the notch in utility corridor and connected with heavy cast iron enamel trap. The trap is to be connected with a section of 4 inch soil pipe stack extending from the floor to the ceiling of the cell, all connections to be made with sanitary tees, all traps to be vented from the crown with 2 inch vents." The foregoing provision, it will be observed, relates to the third story, that is, the third tier of cells, and does not include the six "female and juvenile cells." With respect to the latter, the contract contains this provision: "The six additional cells for juveniles or females will be of the same size as the other cells and constructed in the same manner, except with the entire fronts to be grating, the doors to be swung on 6 inch steel hinges and locked with four tumbler spring lock attached to swing bar, which will cover the entire front door and lock with spring lock." The contract also contains this provision: "The contractor will give his

personal superintendence to the work or have a representative to receive instructions, shall furnish all materials and labor, including heating, transportation, scaffolding, apparatus and utensils necessary to complete the work according to the true intent and meaning of the drawings and specifications, of which intent and meaning the architect shall be the sole interpreter, and his ruling shall be final and binding upon the parties to the contract."

The plaintiff constructed the 84 cells, which were approved by the state architect, as shown by the following communication addressed by him to the board of public lands and buildings: "Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 17, 1904. To the Hon. Board of Public Lands and Buildings, Gentlemen: I have examined the third tier of steel cells also the six juvenile cells at the state penitentiary and find the material and labor in accordance to the plans and specifications. Under head of 'Note Particulars' (see specifications) the plumbing is noted to apply to the third tier only. Yours respectfully, Jas. Tyler, Jr., State Architect."

In addition to the foregoing facts, the petition also contains the following allegations: "(7) That the plaintiff herein constructed said cells (the 84 cells) in conformity with the specifications of said state architect in all things. That plaintiff did not place any plumbing in the six juvenile or female cells contained in said specifications nor did plaintiff connect said cells with the sewerage system, but it was not contemplated by the parties to said contract that plumbing should be placed in such cells. (8) That after the completion of said contract as herein alleged, to wit, on the 17th day of December, 1904, the said state architect, James Tyler, Jr., who by said contract was made the sole judge of said work, duly approved the same, a copy of said approval is hereto attached marked exhibit 'D' and made a part hereof. (9) That the state of Nebraska, on said last named contract, has paid the sum of \$6,654, leaving a balance due on said contract of \$3,328. (10) That on or about the — day of February, 1905, the plaintiff herein filed with the secretary of state its claim

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in triplicate vouchers as required by said secretary of state, and the same was submitted to the auditor of public accounts for the allowance thereof and for a warrant of said sum of \$3,328. (11) That upon the 4th day of September, 1905, the board of public lands and buildings approved said voucher, and ordered the auditor of public accounts to draw his warrant for said sum of \$3,328 in payment of said claim. (12) That on the 26th day of September, 1905, the said auditor of public accounts refused to draw a warrant for said claim, and indorsed his reasons for said refusal upon said voucher as follows: 'Warrant not drawn for reason it appears that work was not completed within the terms of the appropriation.' "

A general demurrer to the petition was interposed and overruled. The state elected to stand on its demurrer, and judgment went accordingly. The state appeals.

The contention of the state is thus epitomized in its brief filed in this court: "The auditor of public accounts cannot be compelled to issue to a contractor a warrant to pay a claim for a public improvement constructed in a manner at variance with the statute making the appropriation against which claimant's voucher is drawn. \* \* \* The appropriation was made for steel cells and sewerage. These two matters were not left to the discretion of the officers. If the board had authority or discretion in other matters, this power did not extend to the sewerage settled by the legislative enactment." This contention is based on the fact that the six "female or juvenile" cells were not connected with the sewerage system, which fact affirmatively appears from the seventh paragraph of the petition included in the quotation therefrom, *supra*. Running through the entire argument is the assumption that the legislative language, "For 240 steel cells and sewerage," should be interpreted as though it read "For 240 steel cells, and sewerage for each of such cells." We know of no good reason for placing that interpretation on the language of the appropriation. On the contrary we think it is fair to presume that the legislature intended to allow

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the board of public lands and buildings a reasonable discretion in the expenditure of the fund, and not to bind it down by unnecessary and vexatious details. The general terms in which the appropriation was made justifies this presumption, and the facts disclosed by the record show the wisdom of avoiding unnecessary details. The six cells were not actually needed, and may not be needed for some time. No location was provided for them. To hold that the board of public lands and buildings was bound to provide sewerage that was not required in order to get cells and sewerage that were required would impute a lack of foresight and sound judgment to the legislature, which is by no means warranted by the language employed in making the appropriation. So far as the contract itself is concerned, we have set out that portion which relates to sewerage and the six cells in question. Standing alone it might admit of some doubt whether it contemplates that the six cells shall be connected with a system of sewerage. But the agents of the state who executed the contract on its behalf, and the state architect who, by the terms of the contract, is made the final arbiter as to the interpretation to be placed on the plans and specifications, held that sewerage for such cells was not contemplated by the contract. Since the contract admits of that construction, we feel bound by it in view of all the circumstances.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

CITY OF SOUTH OMAHA V. OMAHA BRIDGE & TERMINAL  
RAILWAY COMPANY.

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,064.

**Eminent Domain.** Under the provisions of the charter of South Omaha in force in 1901, that city was entitled to at least nominal damages in an action by a railway corporation to condemn a right of way over portions of its streets and alleys.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WILLIS G. SEARS, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*W. C. Lambert*, for plaintiff in error.

*William Baird & Sons, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

The defendant, a railway corporation, being unable to agree with the city council of the plaintiff as to terms and conditions upon which it might construct its roadbed across certain streets and through an alley in the city, proceeded under the provisions of section 83, ch. 16, Comp. St. 1901, to condemn a right of way. This section provides: "If it shall be necessary, in the location of any part of any railroad, to occupy any road, street, alley, or public way or ground of any kind, or any part thereof, it shall be competent for the municipal or other corporation, or public officer or public authorities, owning or having charge thereof, and the railroad company, to agree upon the manner, and upon the terms, and conditions upon which the same may be used or occupied; and if said parties shall be unable to agree thereon and it shall be necessary, in the judgment of the directors of such railroad company, to use or occupy such road, street, alley, or other public way or ground, such company may appropriate so much of the same as may be necessary for the purposes of such road, in the same manner and upon the same

terms as is provided for the appropriation of the property of individuals by the eighty-first section of this chapter." The real estate of private persons is acquired for right of way purposes by condemnation in this state in a proceeding before the judge of the county court, who appoints a jury to assess damages sustained by landowners. Upon the application of the defendant a jury was appointed, who viewed the premises and awarded damages to the plaintiff to the amount of \$3. The city appealed to the district court, where issues were joined and the trial resulted in a directed verdict for the defendant. The city prosecutes error.

The plaintiff claims substantial damages, while the defendant insists that the judgment of the trial court should be affirmed, on the theory that the city could not sustain damages by reason of the location of its right of way across streets and alleys. The authorities are quite uniform that the appropriation of a street by a railway company for the purpose of laying its track is not a perversion from its original purpose, so long as it does not interfere with the use of the street or alley by the public as a highway. This rule, however, is not to be taken as authority for a railway corporation to appropriate streets and alleys for the purpose of laying its tracks. The right to authorize such appropriation is vested in the legislature, and legislative authority is necessary to warrant such use and occupation. *Atchison Street R. Co. v. Missouri P. R. Co.*, 31 Kan. 660, 6 Am. & Eng. Ency. Law (1st ed.), 534. The power to authorize such use may be delegated to municipal authority, and, as will be seen by the provisions of the statute quoted, has been expressly delegated in this state. The statute contemplates that a railroad seeking to occupy a street or alley for right of way purposes, should first apply to the proper municipal officers and if possible agree upon the terms and conditions upon which the streets may be occupied, and if they are unable to agree the company may proceed by condemnation, in the same manner and upon the same terms as is provided for the

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appropriation of the property of individuals. The property of individuals may not be taken by a railway corporation without compensation for the impairment of property rights.

The contention of the defendant is necessarily based upon the conclusion that the plaintiff has no property right in its streets and alleys, and therefore is not entitled to compensation; that a municipality holds the title to streets and alleys in trust for the purpose for which they were dedicated, and such was the holding of this court in *Jaynes v. Omaha Street R. Co.*, 53 Neb. 631. Our holding in that case was in accord with the great weight of authority, but we do not regard it as conclusive of the question here involved, because, notwithstanding that rule, it is competent for the legislature to fix, by the charter of a city, the status of its streets and alleys. Section 104, art. I, ch. 14, Comp. St. 1905, provides the method of platting cities and villages. By section 106 of that chapter it is provided that the acknowledgment and recording of the plat is equivalent to a deed in fee simple of such portions of the premises platted as are in such plat set apart for streets and other public use. In *Lindsay v. City of Omaha*, 30 Neb. 512, it was held, under the provisions of the charter of that city, that upon the vacation of any street the title to the portion so vacated remained in the city, and might be sold and conveyed and the proceeds of the sale converted into the city treasury. One of the provisions of the charter of South Omaha, in force at the time the condemnation proceedings were instituted, was: "That no street or part thereof shall be ordered vacated by the mayor and council except upon the following conditions, to wit: First, that the value of the ground so vacated shall be first determined by the valuation of three disinterested freeholders, who shall be appointed by the mayor and confirmed by a majority vote of all the members elected to the council and they, after being duly sworn to perform the duties of their appointment with fidelity and impartiality, shall value the property so to be vacated by taking into consideration the

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fair market value of the lot or lots abutting on that part of the street to be vacated. Second, the owner or owners of the lot or lots abutting such portion of the street to be vacated shall, before the order of vacation is passed, pay into the city treasury the amount so determined by said appraisers, as the value of said property, and thereupon the mayor of said city shall be authorized to make a deed to the purchaser for that portion of the street so vacated." That the legislature might vest this right in a municipality of the state is without question. The plaintiff's right, under its charter, to vacate its streets, and upon such vacation to receive payment for any portion of the street vacated, was a valuable right and was involved in the condemnation proceedings. We are convinced, therefore, in view of the provisions of the charter of the plaintiff, that it was entitled to at least nominal damages, and that the judgment of the district court, withdrawing from the jury all question of damages, was erroneous.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

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CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY RAILWAY COMPANY V.  
JOHN H. SLATTERY.

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,325.

**¶ Carriers: Care of Stock.** The provisions of sections 4386 and 4387 Revised Statutes of the United States, do not relieve a railway company engaged in conveying animals from one state to another from liability for damages arising through the failure to properly

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- care for, feed and water animals in their charge, the transportation of which is delayed through an act of God.
2. ——: LIABILITY. A common carrier of live stock is generally an insurer of their safe delivery to the consignee against loss or damage.
3. ——: EVIDENCE. The delivery of animals to a carrier in good order and their arrival at the place of destination in bad order makes a *prima facie* case against the carrier, and it devolves upon the carrier to show that the loss or damage resulted from some cause which would exempt it from liability.
4. ——: DUTIES. A cause for unavoidable delay in shipment affords no excuse for a failure to exercise that degree of care required of a common carrier in the transportation of stock.
5. Shipping Contract. A common carrier is not relieved from its responsibility to care for animals entrusted to it for transportation by reason of the express terms of a written contract, whereby the shipper agreed to accompany the stock, where the company, with knowledge of the failure on the part of the shipper to accompany the stock, proceeds under the shipping contract.

ERROR to the district court for Hall county: JAMES N. PAUL, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*J. W. Deweese and Frank E. Bishop*, for plaintiff in error.

*Ashton & Mayer, contra.*

**JACKSON, C.**

The plaintiff charges in his petition that on May 29, 1903, he delivered to the defendant 20 horses to be conveyed from South Omaha, Nebraska, to East St. Louis, Illinois; that the horses were not delivered to him at the destination until June 3, 1903, but were delayed in course of shipment almost four days longer than the time regularly required for transportation between those points; that they were not properly handled and cared for during any part of the time within which they were under the care of the defendant, and were for a period of over 56 hours without food and water, and exposed continuously to the sun and rain,

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and when they were delivered they were sick, gaunt and bruised, as a result of the ill treatment complained of, and that from the effects of such treatment two of the horses died, and that the plaintiff sustained damages. The defendant admits the shipment, and avers it was by virtue of a written contract entered into at the time the shipment was agreed upon; that the stock was shipped and delivered to the consignee at the destination named, without any failure or neglect on its part; that, as a part of the consideration, the plaintiff agreed to accompany the same in order to look after and care for the comfort and necessities of the stock while *en route*, and that he would give the stock proper and reasonable attention while in transit for the purpose of feeding and unloading, when necessary; that, in violation of the contract, the plaintiff did not accompany the shipment, although free transportation was provided and he was furnished with every facility for so doing. As a further defense, it was answered that, by reason of an unprecedented flood that was then prevailing along its line of road, it was unable to transport the stock by the usual route of travel, but was obliged to divert the shipment to another route, and that there was no unnecessary delay or neglect of duty on the part of the defendant; that if the stock sustained any injury by reason of improper attention it was due to the neglect of the plaintiff, who failed to accompany the shipment. In reply, the plaintiff denied that the horses were injured through any fault or negligence on his part, and alleged that the consignment was accepted and forwarded by the defendant with knowledge on its part that no one would accompany the stock. The plaintiff had judgment in the trial court, and the defendant seeks a reversal.

The testimony on behalf of the plaintiff tends to prove that on the 28th day of May, 1903, he came into the city of South Omaha over the Union Pacific Railroad, with this car-load of horses, and that they were there delivered to the Union Stock Yards Company. He applied to the live stock agent of the defendant company to have the horses shipped

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out over the defendant's line to East St. Louis, and informed the defendant's agent that he was going out that evening on the passenger train to St. Louis; that he signed a contract in blank, and also a shipping order to the Union Stock Yards Company, and thereupon left for St. Louis; that the horses were delivered to him in St. Louis on the afternoon of June 3 in a gaunt and damaged condition, some of them suffering from pneumonia, from the effects of which one died in two or three days, and another some weeks thereafter; that on the route covered by the shipment there were facilities for unloading and feeding stock at Creston, Iowa, St. Joseph, Missouri, and other points. On behalf of the defendant the evidence discloses a condition arising from an unusual storm and flood, sufficient, without question, to excuse the delay; that the shipment arrived at Monroe, Missouri, on the morning of June 1, where the horses were unloaded, fed, watered and cared for until the next day at 9 o'clock P. M., when they were reloaded and forwarded to St. Louis. The contract set out in the company's answer was put in evidence and contains this condition: "In consideration for free transportation for one person, designated by the first party (plaintiff), hereby given by said railway company, such person to accompany the stock, it is agreed that the said cars, and the said animals contained therein, are and shall be in the sole charge of such person, for the purpose of attention to and care of said animals, and that the said railway company shall not be responsible for such attention and care. \* \* \* It is agreed that the said animals are to be loaded, unloaded, watered and fed by the owner or his agents in charge." The evidence also discloses that the shipping contract was delivered to the conductor in charge of the train at the city of South Omaha, and when he discovered that no person was aboard in charge of the stock he returned the contract to the company's agent, who forwarded it by mail, addressed to the plaintiff at East St. Louis, Illinois, where it was received by him. There is no evidence as to whether the

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stock was at any time unloaded, fed and watered, between the time it left South Omaha on May 29 and the time it was unloaded at Monroe, Missouri.

On behalf of the railroad company it is claimed that the transaction was an interstate shipment and governed by federal statute. Section 4386 of the Revised Statutes of the United States provides: "No railroad company within the United States whose road forms any part of a line of road over which cattle, sheep, swine or other animals are conveyed from one state to another, \* \* \* shall confine the same in cars \* \* \* for a longer period than twenty-eight consecutive hours without unloading the same for rest, water, and feeding, for a period of at least five consecutive hours, unless prevented from so unloading by storm or other accidental causes." By section 4387 it is provided: "Animals so unloaded shall be properly fed and watered during such rest by the owner or person having the custody thereof, or in case of his default in so doing, then by the railroad company \* \* \* transporting the same at the expense of the owner or person in custody thereof; and such company, owners, or masters shall in such case have a lien upon such animals for food, care, and custody furnished, and shall not be liable for any detention of such animals." The statute also provides a penalty for the violation of these provisions. We do not understand how the defendant is aided by the provisions of the federal statute. It is true that the obligation in the first instance rests upon the owner or his agent in charge, but it attaches with equal force to the public carrier in case of default by the owner. Nor is the carrier released from its responsibility by reason of the express terms of the written contract, whereby the shipper agreed to accompany the stock, but failed to do so. Where the company, with knowledge of such failure, proceeded under the shipping contract, it would still be liable for any loss resulting from its failure to provide the stock with proper care and protection. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Williams*, 61 Neb. 609. The case does not fall within the rule of *Chicago, St.*

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*P., M. & O. R. Co. v. Schuldt*, 66 Neb. 43, where not only was there an agreement that the shipper should accompany the stock and be responsible for its care, but he was provided with transportation for that purpose and personally accompanied the shipment, and it was held that the carrier was only required to provide proper facilities, and, when doing so, was not liable for injury arising from lack of care through the fault of the shipper himself.

Again, liability on the part of the company is denied because of the failure of the plaintiff to prove that the railroad company did not stop the shipment for feed and rest at such places as were possible; that if he claims damages on account of the failure to perform that duty the burden was upon him to show that the company failed to perform it. A carrier of live stock is an insurer of the safety of the property while in its charge for transportation. *Kinnick Bros. v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 69 Ia. 665. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, but the delivery of live stock to a carrier in good order, and their arrival at the place of destination in bad order, makes a *prima facie* case against the carrier, and it devolves upon the carrier to show that the loss or damage resulted from some cause which would exempt it from liability. *Wabash R. Co. v. Sharp*, ante, p. 424.

But it is said that the damage was the direct result of an act of God. This conclusion, however, is not justified by the evidence. The evidence in that respect, as already stated, was sufficient to show a just cause for delay, but there is an entire absence of evidence to show that the flood in any manner interfered with the unloading of the stock, providing it with food and water, and giving it such care as would insure its delivery at the destination in good condition. A cause for unavoidable delay in shipment affords no excuse for a failure to exercise that degree of care required of a common carrier in the transportation of stock. *Kinnick Bros. v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, supra.

The assignments of error are all covered by the general discussion of the case and will not be noticed separately.

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There is no prejudicial error in the record, and we recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

ALBERT, C., concurs.

DUFFIE, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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**MAY SWIHART ET AL. v. H. C. HANSEN.**

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,335.

1. Possession of real estate is some evidence of title, but evidence of possession is not sufficient of itself to establish a freehold estate.
2. Intoxicating Liquors: LICENSE: EVIDENCE. In a hearing upon a remonstrance against granting a license for the sale of liquor, a witness who testifies that the petitioners told him they were freeholders, and that he examined a list of freeholders of a village prepared by the county clerk, does not thereby qualify himself to testify who the freeholders of the village are.

ERROR to the district court for Washington county:  
**WILLIS G. SEARS, JUDGE.** *Reversed with directions.*

*Kirkpatrick & Hazen*, for plaintiffs in error.

*F. Dolezal*, contra.

**JACKSON, C.**

The defendant in error applied to the village board of Kennard, Nebraska, for a license to sell liquor at retail. The plaintiffs are remonstrators who objected to the granting of the license. The remonstrance was overruled, and the remonstrators appealed to the district court, where the findings of the village board were approved and the license issued. From the judgment of the district court the remonstrators prosecute error.

Several questions are discussed, both in the briefs and

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upon oral argument, only one of which we deem it important to notice. One of the grounds of remonstrance was that the persons who signed the petition for license were not freeholders. The only evidence on that branch of the case is found in the testimony of the applicant. In substance it is that one of the petitioners exhibited a deed to the property that he was in possession of; that all the petitioners informed him they were freeholders; that he procured from the county clerk a list of the freeholders in the village so that he knew who the freeholders were; and his testimony, based upon that information, was to the effect that all of the signers were freeholders. There is evidence that some of the persons signing the petition were in the possession of real estate in the village. The list provided by the county clerk, from which the applicant testified, was not exhibited at the hearing or put in evidence. The admission of this evidence was met with an objection, and attacked by motion to strike it out, after the testimony of the applicant was closed, and is now assailed for the reason that it is entirely incompetent to establish the qualifications of those signing the petition.

The statute requires the petition in such cases to be signed by resident freeholders, and where the qualifications of the signers to a petition for the sale of liquor are put in issue by a remonstrance, the burden is upon the applicant to show by competent evidence that the petitioners do possess the qualifications required. A hearing upon an application for a liquor license, from the nature of things, is somewhat informal, but this condition does not obviate the necessity of competent proof. The testimony of the applicant, based upon the list provided by the county clerk and statements made to him by petitioners, was hearsay and incompetent. Evidence of the possession of real estate is some evidence of title, but of the lowest degree. It falls short of being sufficient to establish a freehold estate. In our judgment the objection of the plaintiffs in error is well taken, and the judgment of the district court is erroneous.

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It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to reverse the findings of the village board.

DUFFIE and ALBEET, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to reverse the findings of the village board.

**REVERSED.**

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**CHARLES HARGADINE, APPELLANT, v. OMAHA BRIDGE & TERMINAL RAILWAY COMPANY, APPELLEE.**

FILED MAY 17, 1906. No. 14,546.

1. **Second Appeal: Law of Case.** The determination of questions presented to this court in its review of the proceedings of an inferior tribunal become the law of the case, and ordinarily will not be reexamined in a subsequent review of the proceedings of the inferior tribunal on a second trial or hearing of the cause. *Omaha Life Ass'n v. Kettenbach*, 55 Neb. 330.
2. **Directing Verdict.** The evidence examined, and held to justify the trial court in directing a verdict for the defendant.

**APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*Nelson C. Pratt*, for appellant.

*W. C. Kenyon, William Baird & Sons and J. M. Dickinson, contra.*

**JACKSON, C.**

The defendant is a railway corporation owning terminals and facilities used by the Illinois Central Railroad Company in entering the city of Omaha. It entered into a contract with Gilbert H. Scribner, Jr., of Chicago, Illinois,

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for the erection of a trestle across Cut-Off lake, according to plans and specifications agreed upon between the defendant and the Illinois Central Railroad Company. The work had been sub-let by Scribner to Edward W. Raymond, who employed and paid the workmen, provided the tools, and was engaged in the work of construction. The plaintiff, a bridge carpenter, was in the employ of Raymond. He was at work adjusting heavy timbers on top of the trestle, 30 feet above water. This service was performed by means of a steel bar, wedge shaped at one end. In moving one of the timbers the bar slipped, plaintiff lost his balance, and fell to the water below. In the course of the descent he struck against a heavy plank, and sustained an injury. The action is for damages, and is founded upon an allegation that the plaintiff was in the employ of the defendant; that the accident occurred by reason of a defect in the bar, on account of which it slipped; that he complained to the defendant and objected to using the bar, but was requested to continue in its use until a new bar could be procured to replace it. There is in evidence no dispute about the fact that Scribner was under contract to construct the trestle; that the work was sublet to Raymond, by whom the plaintiff was employed and paid; that the tool used by him was owned by Raymond, and was provided for his use on the morning of the day when the accident occurred by Raymond's foreman. In the trial court, at the close of the evidence, a verdict was directed for the defendant, and the plaintiff appeals. He seeks to hold the defendant liable by an application of the doctrine of *respondeat superior*.

One clause of the contract between the defendant and Scribner provided that the work should be executed in strict conformity to the specifications and plans, and such explanatory instructions as might from time to time be given by the chief engineer of the defendant. A civil engineer in the employ of the defendant was in daily attendance at the work for the purpose of inspection, his only authority being to see that the work was constructed

according to the plans and specifications stipulated in the contract. During a portion of the time a like engineer in the employ of the Illinois Central Railroad Company was present and inspected the work as it progressed. There is some evidence that on two or three occasions one of these engineers gave specific instructions to the workmen. It is not clear whether these directions came from the engineer in the employ of the defendant or the one employed by the Illinois Central Railroad Company, and it is perhaps not important, because the evidence fails to disclose any interference on the part of the engineers, or anything done by them, except along the line of instructions required and permitted by the terms of the contract itself. The engineer in the employ of the defendant, however, testified that at no time did he give the workmen any instructions, and that such suggestions as he made were either to the contractor, the superintendent or foreman in charge of the work, both of whom were in the employ of Raymond.

This is the second time the case has been before us for consideration. Our former opinion is reported in 5 Neb. (Unof.) 418, where we reversed a judgment in favor of the plaintiff. The contract in question is sufficiently set out in that opinion. Our holding there was that the plaintiff was in the employ of an independent contractor; that the relation of master and servant did not exist between the plaintiff and defendant, and under the terms of the contract the defendant had no authority or control over the contractor or his workmen as to the manner of performing the work; that it had power to direct as to results only, and that the fact that the company reserved the right to inspect the work and see that it conformed to the contract in result did not make the contractor the agent of the defendant to the extent that it rendered the defendant liable for a neglect of duty growing out of the contract of employment between the contractor and his employees, and that no obligation rested upon the defendant to provide tools, safe or otherwise, to the workmen. These questions are

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involved in the present record. They were fully discussed and determined in our former opinion, and our holdings there have become the law of the case.

We are asked to review and overrule the conclusions reached at the former hearing, and in addition it is urged that the pleadings have been amended so as to present an entirely different issue, and that the evidence is different from that taken at the former trial. If the issues have been changed, that fact does not appear in the record, and the evidence taken at the former trial is not before us. The evidence of the contractor is that he had a superintendent overseeing the work, and a foreman in charge of the workmen; that no one else had authority to employ or discharge the men, or direct their labor. This evidence is undisputed.

A careful examination of the evidence and a review of the authorities have convinced us that the rule announced in the former opinion should be adhered to; that no course was open to the trial court except the one pursued, and we recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

ALBERT, C., concurs.

DUFFIE, C., took no part in the decision.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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STATE OF NEBRASKA v. GEORGE W. MCCRIGHT ET AL.;  
CHARLES S. McDONALD, INTERVENER.\*

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. Nos. 14,210, 14,211, 14,212, 14,213, 14,214, 14,215,  
14,216, 14,217.

1. **Indemnity School Lands: Rights of Occupants.** By the act of 1875, entitled "An act authorizing parties living on school lands selected in lieu of sections 16 and 36 to purchase the same when the state acquires title" (Comp. St. 1897, ch. 80, art. IV, sec. 4),

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\* Rehearing denied. See opinion, p. 738, *post*.

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persons who complied with the act had a preference right of purchase or lease of land known as indemnity school land, and had title to the improvements made by them thereon.

2. ——: Occupants of indemnity school lands who had complied with the act of 1873 before the repeal thereof were entitled to have the land appraised separately from the improvements, and to be given an opportunity to lease the land upon such appraisal before being ejected therefrom.
3. ——: Estoppel. The fact that the occupant of indemnity school land has attempted to make entry thereof under the homestead laws of the United States, and has, in good faith, contested the right of the state to the same as indemnity school lands, will not estop him to assert his right under the act of 1873 relating to the improvements of actual settlers upon lands so obtained by the state.

**ORIGINAL action by the state in the nature of ejectment.  
Dismissed.**

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson,  
for the state.*

*Flickinger Brothers and H. F. Rose, for intervener.*

*M. F. Harrington, Sanford Parker and W. T. Wills,  
contra.*

**SEDGWICK, C. J.**

These eight cases were by agreement consolidated and presented together. They involve the right of possession of lands within the abandoned Fort Randall military reservation. The defendants do not claim the title to the lands themselves. In *State v. Tanner*, 73 Neb. 104, which also involved lands within the abandoned reservation, the defendants asserted title in the lands, but that claim was denied. In these cases the right of the defendants to possession of the land is asserted on the ground that they have made valuable improvements thereon, and that the state cannot oust them from the lands without first having their improvements appraised. The origin of the state's title

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and rights in the land, as a part of the school lands, is set out at large in the opinion in *State v. Tanner, supra*. The state officials refused to appraise the lands separately from the improvements which these defendants had made thereon; the defendants refused to lease them without such appraisement, and the lands were leased to other persons who have intervened herein and demand possession of the lands under their leases.

In 1893 these defendants settled upon the lands in controversy and began improving them. By the act of July 5, 1884 (23 St. at Large, p.103, ch. 214), congress provided for the surveying, appraisement and sale of the lands constituting the reservation. The act contained no express provisions subjecting these lands to homestead or pre-emption entry. By the act of August 23, 1894 (28 St. at Large, p. 491, ch. 314), congress provided that all lands of abandoned military reservations placed under the control of the secretary of the interior which had not already been disposed of, and the disposal of which had not been provided for by a subsequent act of congress, should be open for settlement under the public land laws, and the act gave a preference right of entry for six months from the date of the act to *bona fide* settlers who were qualified to enter under the homestead law, had made homes and were residing upon any agricultural lands in said reservation. The state by the enabling act was granted sections 16 and 36 in each township in the state as school lands. Some of these lands so granted, the state for various reasons was unable to obtain. Congress by the act of 1893 (27 St. at Large, p. 555, ch. 200) provided that the state might select lands in this abandoned reservation in lieu of the lands to which it was entitled and which it had failed to receive under the enabling act. In making selection of indemnity lands the state officers, apparently not knowing that the lands in controversy here were occupied by settlers, selected these tracts of land among others. Afterwards, when these settlers applied to the land department of the government to enter these lands under the homestead act pursuant to

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the provisions of the act of congress of 1894 above referred to, there was no doubt that they came within the terms of that act, and would have been entitled to so enter the lands, but for the fact that the disposal of these lands had been provided for by the act of congress which allowed the state to take the lands as indemnity lands as above mentioned. It seems to have been a mere chance that the state selected these lands instead of others in the abandoned reservation. But for the unfortunate fact that these lands were selected by the state when others might as well have been selected, the defendants would have been recognizd by the land department of the government, and would have been allowed to take these lands under the homestead law; and so it seems manifest that, although when they went upon the lands they did so without any assurance from the general government that they would or could acquire title to the lands, still the government did not regard them as wrong-doers, but on the other hand enacted legislation which would have protected them and would have given them the lands which they had occupied and improved, but for the accident that the state mistakenly selected these lands instead of other lands equally available which it might have selected. The state seems to have anticipated that such conditions might exist. As early as 1875 the legislature enacted: "Any person or persons who shall have resided continuously for a term of five years on lands selected in lieu of sections sixteen and thirty-six for common school purposes, shall, unless the state acquires title thereto, have the privilege of purchasing the same, on the same terms as other school lands are purchased from the state: *Provided*, That such land shall be appraised under direction of the county commissioners, at not less than seven dollars per acre: *Provided further*, That such appraisal shall not include any improvements placed on said lands by the person so purchasing the same." Laws 1875, p. 123. This law was in force when these defendants went upon the lands in question, and made the most of their improvements thereon, and also when they made their

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application to the general government to enter the lands under the homestead law and were denied the right to so enter them because of the fact that the land had been disposed of by the general government by allowing the state to take the land as indemnity school lands. If this statute had remained in force until this action was begun there could be no doubt of the rights of these defendants. Under this statute it would clearly have been the duty of the state to have appraised all of the improvements that the defendants had placed upon these lands separately from the lands themselves before attempting to lease the lands to these defendants or to any other person. No such appraisement was made by the state, and without such appraisement the leases were made under which these interveners claim. The statute in question was repealed by the act of 1899 (laws 1899, ch. 69), and the question is as to the effect of this repeal upon the rights of these defendants. The act of 1897 (laws 1897, ch. 71) repealed prior acts governing the entry and leasing of school lands, and provided general laws governing the educational lands of the state. By section 5 of said act provision is made "for paying for movable improvements" to the person owning the same, and giving to any person having made such movable improvements the option for six months of removing them from the land or accepting the appraised value thereof. Although these provisions are expressed in general terms, and might in the absence of any other legislation upon the subject be construed to apply to the case at bar, yet in view of the act of 1875 above referred to, which was continued in force and must be construed with the new act, this section cannot be applied to these defendants. From the time that this act of 1875 was enacted until its repeal in 1899 the laws governing the educational lands of the state were repeatedly changed, amended, repealed and reenacted. But the legislature at each session recognized this act of 1875. It constitutes a special provision governing the rights of settlers upon government lands that afterwards may become a part

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of the school lands of the state by their selection as indemnity lands "in lieu of sections 16 and 36 for common school purposes," and must, of course, govern any general provisions of the statute enacted with it. Section 17 of the act of 1899 provides for the forfeiture of leases for the nonpayment of rent, and contains the only reference in the act to improvements on the school lands in the following words: "Persons owning movable improvements on lands reverting to the state may remove the same within six months after such land is released and all improvements not so removed shall inure to the benefit of the new lessee." This section, of course, could not apply to these defendants. Section 4 provides for the appraisement of school lands and its language is so general as to include the lands in question. Nothing is said in this section in regard to improvements upon the lands. Under the law as it existed at the time this section was adopted, the improvements upon these lands belonged to the settlers thereon who had placed them there; and we think that, rather than to conclude that the legislature intended to confiscate these improvements, the section should be construed to require the state's rights and interest in the land to be appraised, which would not include the improvements made by *bona fide* settlers upon lands that had been selected by the state as "indemnity school lands," which improvements, by the act of 1875, would belong to such settlers. The lands then should have been appraised separately from the improvements, and these settlers should have been given the opportunity to lease the lands upon such appraisement. Without such appraisement and opportunity to the settlers, the state would not be entitled to the possession of the land, and could not make a valid lease thereof to other persons, and this action therefore cannot be maintained. The fact that further legislation may be necessary to enable these settlers to purchase the lands upon such appraisement, or otherwise avail themselves of the value of their improvements, does

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not relieve the state officials of the duty to cause the lands to be appraised separately from the improvements as above indicated, and to allow these settlers to lease the lands upon such appraisement.

2. These defendants at first resisted the claims of the state upon the ground that the law had not been complied with by the state, and that for other reasons the state was not entitled to these lands as indemnity school lands. Upon that theory the defendants applied to the land department, as before stated, to enter these lands under the homestead act, but this contention was decided against them both by the general land office and by this court in *State v. Tanner, supra*. It is now insisted that, by making this contention, the defendants have estopped themselves to claim that they are entitled to the improvements which they had made upon the land under the statutes of this state regulating the entry and leasing of school lands, but we do not see any merit in this objection. It does not appear that the right of the state to the lands themselves, as against these defendants, was so clear and free from all doubt as to justify a charge of bad faith against the defendants in attempting to homestead the lands; and, when it was decided that they were not entitled to the land, no good reason appears why they should not be allowed, after it had been established that these lands are a part of the school lands of the state, and came within the provisions of the act of 1875, to ask the state to comply with the provisions of that act.

We conclude that neither the state nor the interveners were entitled to the possession of these lands when this action was begun. The action therefore is dismissed at the cost of the state.

DISMISSED.

The following opinion on motion for new trial and motion for rehearing was filed May 10, 1907. *Motions overruled:*

## BY THE COURT.

In 1903 the state claimed that the lands known as the "Lloyd County School Lands" belonged to the state, and that the settlers on the various tracts of land that have been in controversy since were trespassers thereon. It then had the lands involved in this suit appraised for leasing under the statute then in force, and these defendants, who were settlers on the land and had been occupying and improving the land for ten years prior to that time, challenged the title of the state and claimed that they had the right to the lands under the homestead laws of the United States. A suit was begun then against several defendants, situated similarly with the defendants in this case, and upon trial in this court it was determined in March, 1905, that the state owned the lands, and that the settlers must surrender the lands to the state. *State v. Tanner*, 73 Neb. 104. The lands of these defendants, as before stated, were appraised in 1903, and these defendants then refused to lease them from the state because they were making claim to the lands, and did not desire to waive those claims and acknowledge that the lands belonged to the state. Therefore the state at once leased the lands to intervenor McDonald and other parties, and the other parties have assigned their leases to McDonald, and he claims under a lease executed in 1903 when the right in the land itself was in controversy. After it had been decided as before stated, in *State v. Tanner, supra*, that the state was entitled to the lands, which decision was in March, 1905, the state began this action in April of that year against these defendants. No new appraisement of the land was made, the state insisting and this intervenor insisting, that the appraisement made two years before and the lease made to this intervenor and his assignors under that appraisement were valid and binding. These defendants from the time of the appraisement two years before to the time of commencement of this action had been occupying the lands

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and making improvements thereon, believing that they were the owners of the land; but when that claim was decided adversely in *State v. Tanner, supra*, and after this action was begun, the defendants conceded that they were not the owners of the land, and made application to the state to have the land appraised. They made this demand as settlers upon the land, claiming that they had then been settlers upon the land for twelve years and making improvements thereon. Under this application some proceedings were had before the county board, but the matter appears to have been referred to the state board, and it adopted a resolution to take no action thereon because the matter was pending in the supreme court. It will be seen that the statement in the opinion that the state refused to appraise the land separately from the improvements is inaccurate because it is not limited. The state, when it demanded the land, had the land appraised separately from the improvements, but after its claim of ownership of the lands was settled in its favor no opportunity was given these defendants to lease the lands. In the former opinion herein it was said:

“When it was decided that they (these defendants) were not entitled to the land, no good reason appears why they should not be allowed, after it had been established that these lands are a part of the school lands of the state, and came within the provisions of the act of 1875, to ask the state to comply with the provisions of that act.”

The defendants appear to have acted in good faith throughout, as shown in the former opinion. They presented their case upon the theory that, after their right to the land had been determined adversely, they were entitled to have their improvements appraised, which would include the improvements made during the two years (now four years) since the appraisal. The former opinion was written upon the supposition, mistakenly as it now appears, that the appraisal made in 1903 was not relied upon by either party. If that appraisal is now regarded as sufficient for the purposes of this action,

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these defendants will forfeit their improvements because they insisted upon their right to the land itself. It seems more reasonable to hold that the appraisement of 1903 was abandoned on the part of the state by its delay in bringing this action. During that delay the situation of the parties and the condition of the land were so changed as to require a new appraisement. In this view of the case the judgment is right. The motion for new trial and the motion for rehearing are therefore

OVERRULED.

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**STATE, EX REL. ELMER E. THOMAS, APPELLEE, v. BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSIONERS OF CITY OF OMAHA, APPELLANT.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,627.

1. **Liquor License: Evidence: Transcript.** Upon contests of applications for liquor license, the board hearing the contest is not bound by the stipulations of the parties providing a method of taking and transcribing the evidence not prescribed by statute, and involving greater expense in reducing the evidence to writing than is necessarily incurred in the manner of trial contemplated by statute. If the evidence is taken pursuant to such stipulations, the board will not be compelled by mandamus to reduce the evidence to writing in the manner provided for by such stipulation of the parties without payment of the extra expense of so doing made necessary by the unusual manner of taking the evidence.
2. **—: Appeal: Transcript.** An appeal from the decision of the board in granting a liquor license is taken by giving notice of the intended appeal, and procuring a transcript of the record of the proceedings before the board, and filing the same in the appellate court. When such appeal has been taken, the court may compel the board to furnish a duly certified transcript of the evidence taken before the board upon the hearing. A peremptory mandamus to compel the board to reduce the evidence to writing and file the same in the office of the board is not necessary.
3. **—: —: —.** A party desiring to appeal from the decision of the board of fire and police commissioners of Omaha

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granting a liquor license is entitled to a certified transcript of the record of the proceedings before such board, upon demand and the payment of reasonable fees for making such transcript. The board is not required to furnish such transcript without the payment of fees therefor.

APEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
**ABRAHAM L. SUTTON, JUDGE. Reversed.**

*John P. Breen, W. H. Herdman, Harry E. Burnam and I. J. Dunn, for appellant.*

*Elmer E. Thomas, contra.*

**SEDWICK, C. J.**

The relator filed with the board of fire and police commissioners of the city of Omaha remonstrances against the applications for licenses of 170 saloon-keepers of that city. The remonstrances were overruled, and, upon application to the district court for Douglas county and a hearing thereon, a peremptory writ of mandamus was granted against the board of fire and police commissioners commanding them to reduce the evidence to writing in each of 170 cases, and have the same filed in their office, and to make transcripts of the records also in each of the 170 cases, and to deliver the same to the relator to enable him to prosecute appeals in all of the cases, notice of which appeals had been duly given. From the order granting the peremptory writ the board of fire and police commissioners have appealed to this court.

1. One of the objections to the granting of the peremptory writ now insisted upon is that, upon the hearing before the board of fire and police commissioners, stipulations were entered into by this relator, who was remonstrator there, on the one part, and the attorneys representing the applicants for license on the other part, by which it was agreed: "That about 30 cases should be heard together for the purpose of saving time, and that, when the official stenographer of the board should write up the

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testimony, he should separate it and write the record of testimony in each case separately"; that the stenographer was unable to separate the evidence of the witnesses so as to determine what evidence pertained to each case respectively, and so it would become necessary for the stenographer to write out all the evidence taken for each and every one of the cases; that the evidence taken before the board was very voluminous, and to procure the whole thereof to be written out in each of the 170 cases would require an outlay of something over \$5,000. It is conceded that, when a hearing is had before the board upon a remonstrance against the granting of a saloon license, it is the duty of the board to cause the evidence taken to be reduced to writing and filed in the office of the board for the use of any party desiring to appeal, and that anyone interested may insist upon the board so doing without any payment therefor. But it is contended that, when the parties interested in the contest make agreements among themselves in regard to the manner of taking of the testimony by which the expense of writing out the testimony taken would be greatly increased, without making any provision in their agreement by which the expenses may be restricted in amount to the ordinary expenses in such cases, the board is not obliged to incur the great expense so made necessary without being compensated therefor. It would seem reasonable that the board should not be bound by the stipulations entered into by the parties contesting before them. The board might consider that both parties contemplated resting their case upon the decision of the board and without availing themselves of the right of appeal, or that the parties contemplated themselves bearing the extra expense caused by their unusual manner of taking the testimony. It is not doubted that it would be the duty of the board, upon request for that purpose and after notice of appeal, to cause the evidence taken in the respective cases to be reduced to writing so far as the same was made necessary by the hearing before them in the manner pointed out by the statute, when such evidence was neces-

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sary to enable the defeated party to diligently prosecute his appeal. Whether more than this could be required of the board it is not necessary for us now to further discuss, because of the conclusion that we have reached upon other matters presented.

2. In *State v. McGuire*, 74 Neb. 769, it was held that the evidence taken before the board "is not essential to give the district court jurisdiction of an appeal from an order granting a license; the filing of a certified transcript of the proceedings containing such order being sufficient for that purpose," and it was also held in that case that, "where the district court has acquired jurisdiction of such appeal by the filing of a certified transcript of the proceedings, and the license board fails to transmit the evidence taken before it at the hearing, the district court may enter a rule requiring the board to supply the omission." This we think is the regular and orderly practice, and, this being the law, no writ of mandamus is necessary to compel the board to reduce the evidence to writing in aid of one who desires to appeal to the district court from the decision of the board. When the district court has acquired jurisdiction of the case, it may make such orders as are necessary for completing the appeal, and is in a better position so to do than upon the extraordinary proceedings in mandamus. If the board has complied with the law and caused the evidence taken in the case to be reduced to writing and filed in the office of the board, it can readily transmit such evidence properly certified to the district court. If it has neglected to reduce the evidence to writing, the court can compel the board so to do as far as it is possible, and the remedy provided by the statute is therefore complete.

3. The controversy in regard to making of the transcripts of the record of the board appears to turn upon the question of fees. Is the board entitled to fees for making these transcripts, or is it compelled to furnish them without payment therefor? The statute provides: "The testimony on said hearing shall be reduced to writing and filed in the office of application, and if any party feels

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himself aggrieved by the decision in said case he may appeal therefrom to the district court, and said testimony shall be transmitted to said district court and such appeal shall be decided by the judge of such court upon said evidence alone." Comp. St. 1903, ch. 50, sec. 4. The statute does not point out the steps necessary in order to appeal from a decision of the board. It does not provide in terms for any transcript of the record of the proceedings before the board, and, of course, contains no express provision as to payment of fees therefor. In the earlier cases construing this statute it was frequently said that the purpose of the legislature was to facilitate the taking of appeals, and that the public was interested in preventing licenses to irresponsible and improper parties. If the law provided that an appeal might be taken by filing a written notice thereof with the board, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that after such notice had been given it would be the duty of the board to transmit to the court such records of the proceedings as would be necessary to enable the court to pass upon the appeal. Although the point has not been expressly adjudicated, it has been in several cases assumed that the appeal is taken by procuring a transcript of the record and lodging the same in the appellate court. *Lydick v. Korner*, 13 Neb. 10; *State v. Trustees of Village of Elwood*, 37 Neb. 473. This construction of the statute has generally been accepted and acted upon, and we feel constrained to follow it now. In order therefore to take an appeal, it was necessary for the remonstrator in this case to give notice of his intention to appeal, and to procure a transcript of the proceedings of the board. This seems to be conceded. But the trial court seems to have held that the relator would be entitled to these transcripts upon demand of the board and without payment therefor. In *State v. Trustees of Village of Elwood, supra*, it is assumed that the village clerk would be entitled to demand his fees for such transcripts in advance, but the court said that it was not a material question in that case, and so it was not decided. And in *State v.*

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*Bonsfield*, 24 Neb. 517, it was said: "There is no doubt of the right of the appellants to a transcript of all the proceedings, upon the payment of legal fees therefor, and that part of the case will not be further noticed." And it has generally been assumed that, when the hearing has been before the county board, or city or village authorities, whose clerks are by statute allowed a fee for transcripts of the records, the party demanding a transcript for appeal must pay the ordinary fees therefor. An attempt is made to make a distinction in this case because the statute makes no specific provision for making transcripts of records of the board of fire and police commissioners. The principle is invoked that, when the law imposes a duty upon a salaried officer and provides no specific fees therefor, he must look to his salary for the compensation for such duties. We think that the principle is not applicable to a case like this. The statute contemplates contests of this kind before county commissioners, and boards of supervisors, and before city councils and trustees of villages, and in all these cases parties desiring transcripts of proceedings must pay for transcribing the same. It seems unreasonable to suppose that the legislature intended to vary from this rule when the services that are ordinarily performed by clerks entitled to fees therefor are demanded of public officials of this character; that in most cases of contest of applications for license to sell liquors the party desiring transcripts should be required to pay for the same, and exception should be made in other cases where there is no apparent reason for such exception. The relator should have tendered reasonable fees for these transcripts. His failure to do so appears to be the sole reason for refusing the transcripts, and the peremptory writ therefore should not be issued.

The judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

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**LETTON, J., concurring separately.**

While I concur in the result, on account of the failure of the relator to tender reasonable fees for the transcripts, I dissent from the views expressed as to the board not being compelled to furnish a transcript of the evidence on account of the manner in which it was taken. The control of the manner in which the evidence is produced is with the board. It is not compelled to recognize any stipulations or agreements of the parties with reference to how it shall be taken. If they see fit to stipulate to a manner of taking it which will involve greater expense than usual in reducing the evidence to writing, the board need not be bound by it; but if it consents to the agreement and allows the evidence to be taken in accordance therewith, the fact that this method will entail greater expense than the usual and ordinary method will not excuse the board from a failure to perform its legal duty in furnishing a transcript of it upon demand. While in one sense the applicant and remonstrators are parties to the proceedings, the public also has an interest, and it would be against public policy to allow the board to plead the acts and agreements of the contending parties as an excuse for its failure to perform a duty enjoined upon it by law.

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**STATE, EX REL. JOHN H. MICKEY ET AL., RELATORS, v. W. A. SELLECK ET AL., RESPONDENTS.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,664.

1. **Schools: CHILDREN OF STATE OFFICERS.** Under section 2, subd. 14, ch. 78, laws 1881, as amended by section 6, ch. 62, laws 1899, state officers, living in Lincoln during their terms of office, may send their children of school age to the public schools of the Lincoln district without paying tuition, even though they retain their legal residence elsewhere.

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2. ——: TEMPORARY RESIDENTS. If a family, or the person or persons having the legal custody and control of children of school age, remove to and live in a school district other than the district of their legal residence, and such removal is not for the purpose of obtaining school privileges, but is principally from other motives, such children are entitled to free school privileges while so living in the district.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondents to admit children of relators to the public schools. *Writ allowed.*

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, W. T. Thompson and W. B. Rose,* for relators.

*Clark & Allen, contra.*

SEDWICK, C. J.

The relators filed their petition in this court to obtain a peremptory writ of mandamus against the defendants, who are members of the board of education of the school district of Lincoln, to admit the children of relators in the public schools free of tuition. The relators are respectively the governor of the state and the superintendent of public instruction. A general demurrer was filed to the petition. The constitution requires the governor and other specified state officers to "reside at the seat of government during their terms of office." Const. sec. 1, art. V. The state superintendent of public instruction is not included in this requirement, but the duties of his office are such as to make it more convenient and suitable for him to reside at the capital of the state, and he has during the incumbency of the office resided in the city of Lincoln with his family, and continues so to do. Both of these state officers have maintained their legal residences respectively at their former homes, not within the city of Lincoln. They have children of school age and desire that they attend the public schools. Section 2, subd. 14, ch. 78, laws 1881, provided: "That all schools organized within the limits of

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said cities shall be under the direction and control of the boards of education authorized by this subdivision. Such schools shall be free to all children between the ages of five and twenty-one years, whose parents or guardians reside within the limits of said district." An act of the legislature in 1899 was entitled: "An act to provide free attendance at public high schools of nonresident pupils; to provide for the expense thereof, and to amend section 3 of subdivision 6, sections 2 and 7 of subdivision 14, and 2 of subdivision 17, chapter 79 Compiled Statutes of Nebraska for 1897, and to repeal said original sections as now existing." Laws 1899, ch. 62. The main purpose of the act was to establish free public high schools, and to allow nonresidents to attend them. By this act the section above quoted was amended to read as follows: "That all schools organized within the limits of said cities shall be under the direction and control of the boards of education authorized by this subdivision. Such schools shall be free to all children between the ages of five and twenty-one years, whose parents or guardians live within the limits of said district, and all children of school age nonresidents of said district who are or may be by law allowed to attend said schools without charge." Laws 1899, ch. 62, sec. 6. It will be noticed that the amendment consists in inserting the word "live" in place of the word "reside" in the second sentence of the section, and adding to the section the words "and all children of school age nonresidents of said district who are or may be by law allowed to attend said schools without charge." This last clause was clearly added to the section in view of the other provisions contained in the act of 1899. No such reason existed for substituting the word "live" in place of the word "reside" in the body of the section. A reason can be given for this change, if we suppose that the legislature intended that *bona fide* inhabitants of a school district might have the benefit of free public schools for their children, and desired to remove all doubt upon that question, considering that the word "reside" might be construed to apply only to those who

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were domiciled in the district, and were maintaining a legal residence therein for all purposes. This change must have been made out of an abundance of caution. The word "reside" in the section as it was originally would not necessarily be construed to mean a legal residence as distinguished from actual inhabitancy. The exact meaning to be given to the words "reside" and "residence" depends oftentimes upon the connection in which they are used, and upon the general purposes of the legislation in which they may be employed. The policy of our state is to furnish free schools for all children of school age, and to compel unwilling parents to give their children the benefit of these schools. We are satisfied with the language used upon this point in *McNish v. State*, 74 Neb. 261. Our school law does not contemplate that families will be broken up for the purpose of sending children to the common schools. It was necessary for these officers to be at the state capital, and the allegations of the petition show that they live in Lincoln within the meaning of the school law.

2. In *State v. School District of City of Superior*, 55 Neb. 317, the relator "owned a farm in Kansas and had resided thereon with his family as a home for many years." Every fall, for several years, he had moved his family and a portion of his household goods to the city of Superior in this state "to permit his children to attend the public schools of that city, and at the close of the school year they moved back to their farm in Kansas, where they remained until the beginning of another school year." The main fact, then, upon which the decision depended was that the relator had taken his children to the city of Superior solely for the purpose of sending them to school; and it has been held that such action would be a fraud upon the school district, and that the children of the relator under such circumstances might be required to pay tuition. Opinion of state superintendent of Wisconsin, quoted in *State v. Thayer*, 74 Wis. 48. This case is cited and other portions of the opinion of the superintendent quoted from

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with approval in *McNish v. State, supra*. This appears to be a just distinction. If the family is removed temporarily to the school district for the principal purpose of obtaining the advantages of the school without expense to the family, the school authorities may protect the district from such imposition. If the family, or the person or persons having the legal custody and control of children of school age, remove to and live in the school district principally from other motives than obtaining the privilege of the schools for their children, even though their stay in the school district is not expected to be permanent, such children should not be deprived of the benefits of school privileges while so living in the district. If the removal to the district is solely for the purpose of obtaining school privileges, still if the legal residence of the family is actually changed to the school district, whatever the motive may be for so doing, there can be no doubt of the right of the children to school privileges. It was upon this ground that the relator in *State v. School District of City of Superior, supra*, claimed school privileges for his children. He presented to the court the issue as to whether he had actually changed his legal residence to Superior, and it was that question that was discussed by the court.

The respondents should have admitted these children into the public schools without charge for tuition. The facts are fully stated in the petition for the writ, and upon the argument it was understood that the respondents had no further defense to make. The relators therefore are entitled to a peremptory writ upon this application.

WRIT ALLOWED.

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In re Burton.

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IN RE EUGENE BURTON.

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 943.

**Attorneys: ADMISSION TO PRACTICE.** Section 9, ch. 3, Rev. St. 1866, was not repealed as a whole by ch. 6, laws 1895, but the power of the district court to admit attorneys of other states to practice in this state was taken away by that act. *In re Admission to the Bar*, 61 Neb. 58, distinguished.

**APPLICATION of Eugene Burton for admission to the bar.**  
*Motion for admission sustained.*

SEDGWICK, C. J.

On the application of Eugene Burton for admission to the bar, the bar commission reported specially asking the opinion of the court upon a question of law. Section 9, ch. 3, Rev. St. 1866, provided for the admission to the bar of practicing attorneys of other states. This court said that this section, which was also section 9, ch. 7, Comp. St. 1893, was repealed by chapter 6, laws 1895. *In re Admision to the Bar*, 61 Neb. 58. Of course, if this section was repealed it could not afterwards be amended, but in 1903 the legislature attempted to amend it, and enacted that it should thereafter read as follows: "Any person producing a license, or other satisfactory voucher, proving either that he has been regularly admitted an attorney at law in the courts of record of any state where the requirements for admission when he was admitted were equal to those prescribed in this state, or so proving that he has practiced law five full years in courts of record under license in any state, and proving also that he is a person of good moral character, may be admitted by the supreme court to the bar in this state without examination." Laws 1903, ch. 5, sec. 3. The question then is whether the original section was repealed by the act of 1895. The point decided in the opinion above referred to was that the provision of the original section that attorneys might be

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admitted by the district court was necessarily repealed by implication, and not that the whole section was repealed. It was recited in the opinion that "it appears that some of the district courts are still assuming the power to admit to practice generally persons who present certificates of admission from the courts of other states and of territories," and it was determined that the district courts have no such power since the enactment of the law of 1895. That law expressly gives the sole power of admission to the supreme court, and thereby so far repeals section 9 of the former act as to take away the jurisdiction of the district court in such matters. The expression in the opinion, "The act is complete in itself and results in repealing sections 3 and 9 above referred to," was perhaps unfortunate. If it repeals sections 3 and 9 it must repeal the whole chapter, which at that time embraced 14 sections containing many important provisions not included in the act of 1895. There was nothing then to prevent the legislature from amending section 9 as it did in the act of 1903, and the section, as so amended, is valid.

The motion for admission is therefore

SUSTAINED.

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**LANCASTER COUNTY ET AL. V. CHARLES O. WHEDON.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,195.

1. **TAXATION: APPEAL: BURDEN OF PROOF.** Where a taxpayer appeals from the action of the board of equalization in the matter of the assessment of property for taxation, the burden is on the appellant to show that the decision of the board is erroneous.
2. ——: **JUDGMENT: EVIDENCE.** The statement of a witness that he would not have increased the assessed valuation of the real estate of a certain precinct or ward, and that such increase did not tend to equalize the values of real estate throughout the city, without stating any facts as a basis for his opinion, is not sufficient to overthrow the judgment of the board of equalization.

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3. ——: EQUALIZATION: NOTICE. Where the value of property, as returned by the assessor, as to an entire precinct is relatively too low, it may be raised by the board of equalization without notice previously given to property owners.
4. Board of Equalization: FINDINGS. The statute requires no formal finding by the board of equalization as a basis for its action in equalizing assessments between precincts, and a finding that it is necessary to a just and proper equalization of the assessments of the various precincts and wards of a county that the aggregate assessment of certain precincts and wards be raised, and that others be lowered, is sufficient to sustain an order equalizing such assessments.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*J. L. Caldwell, F. M. Tyrrell and Charles E. Matson*, for plaintiffs in error.

*Charles O. Whedon, pro se.*

BARNES, J.

The facts underlying this controversy, as disclosed by the record, are as follows: On the 7th day of July, 1904, the last day of the session of the county board of equalization of Lancaster county, an order was entered by said board equalizing the assessments in said county, as follows: "Whereas, it is necessary to a just and proper equalization of the assessment of the various precincts and wards of Lancaster county that the aggregate assessment of certain precincts and wards be raised and lowered; therefore, be it resolved by the board of equalization of Lancaster county, Nebraska, that the following precincts and wards be lowered, viz. (then follows the names of 22 precincts): and the aggregate assessment of the following precincts and wards be raised, viz.: Fifth ward—lots 10 per cent.; sixth ward—lots 10 per cent.; first ward—lots 10 per cent.; third ward—lots 10 per cent. The amount of such additions or reductions shall be added to or subtracted from each individual assessment in

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said precincts or wards *pro rata*, except where valuations have been fixed by the board of equalization." Some two weeks later Charles O. Whedon, a resident taxpayer of the fifth ward in the city of Lincoln, filed a notice with the county clerk certifying his intention of appealing from the order increasing the assessed valuation of the real estate in said ward. His appeal bond was later approved and, together with a transcript of the proceedings of the board, was filed with the clerk of the district court, thus perfecting his appeal in accordance with the practice governing appeals from the allowance or disallowance of claims by the county board. Later on the appellant filed his petition in said court, alleging, among other things, that he prosecuted the appeal on his own behalf and on behalf of all other owners of real estate subject to taxation in said Fifth ward precinct. The county attorney demurred to the appellant's petition, and when the cause came on for trial withdrew the demurrer, and objected to the introduction of any evidence on the part of the appellant on the grounds that the court had no jurisdiction over the subject matter, and no jurisdiction over the person of any taxpayer of the Fifth ward other than Mr. Whedon. The objection was overruled; the case was tried upon the evidence introduced by the appellant alone, and the court thereupon made the following findings: "That the plaintiff was the owner of certain real estate in the Fifth ward of the city of Lincoln, said ward being one of the precincts of Lancaster county; \* \* \* that appellant prosecutes the appeal, not only on his own behalf, but on behalf of all other owners of real estate subject to taxation in said precinct; that on the last day of the sitting of the board of equalization of said county, to wit, on the 7th day of July, 1904, said board made its order as set out in appellant's petition, and that the county clerk in making up the tax list of said county added to each lot or tract of real estate in said precinct 10 per cent. above the valuation placed thereon by the county assessor or his deputy; that such increase of 10 per cent. was not necessary or

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proper to be made for the purpose of equalizing the valuations of property in said county for the purpose of producing a just relation between all the valuations of property in said county, or for any purpose whatever, and that such increase was unauthorized, and was arbitrarily made, without ascertainment being made or had by said county board as to whether the valuation of the property in said precinct bore a just relation to the property in other precincts of said county." And thereupon the court reversed the order of the board of equalization, annulled the same, set it aside, directed the county treasurer to correct his tax record to conform to the judgment of the court, and taxed the costs of the proceeding to the county. From said judgment the county attorney has brought the case to this court by a petition in error.

The plaintiffs contend that, no complaint having been filed before the board of equalization, neither the appellant Whedon, nor any other real estate owner in the Fifth ward, can be heard to complain that his assessment was too high, or, in other words, that the court was without jurisdiction of the subject matter of the appeal. Section 124, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1903, provides: "Appeals may be taken from any action of the county board of equalization to the district court within twenty days after its adjournment, in the same manner as appeals are now taken from the action of the county board in the allowance or disallowance of claims against the county." It is further provided by said section that "the court shall hear the appeal as in equity and without a jury, and determine anew all questions raised before the board which relate to the liability of the property to assessment, or the amount thereof." So, it would seem that a taxpayer, or the taxpayers collectively, of any precinct or ward may appeal from the action of the board of equalization in such a case by proceeding in the manner pointed out by the statutes. Whether it is necessary for the appellant to file a complaint and have a hearing before the board, as a foundation for his right to appeal, we are not required to determine in this

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case, because the judgment of the district court must be reversed on other grounds, and we therefore leave that question for future consideration.

It is next contended that the evidence is insufficient to sustain the judgment of the trial court. As before stated, the appellant introduced his testimony, and no evidence was produced on behalf of the appellees. But one witness, Mr. J. R. C. Miller, was produced, who testified as follows: "Q. Mr. Miller, in regard to the raise of 10 per cent. on real estate in the Fifth ward precinct, in view of the assessed valuation placed on the property of the city and the investigation that you have made since the adjournment of the board of equalization, would you say that that raise of 10 per cent. on the real estate of the Fifth ward was unnecessary and excessive in comparison with the valuation on other property in the city? A. Yes, I think that is true. But I would like also to say that it don't make the assessment any more uniform by the 10 per cent. raise than if it had been left off. Q. How is that? A. I would say that it don't make the assessment any more uniform by putting the 10 per cent. on than if it had been left off. Q. (By Mr. Caldwell.) You mean uniform throughout the ward? A. Yes. Q. (By Mr. Whedon.) You would say, then, that that raise was unnecessary, and did not tend to equalize the values of the real estate throughout the city? A. No, sir. Q. And you would not make that increase now just upon that ward alone, in view of the valuation that has been placed upon the other property throughout the city—real estate throughout the city? A. No, not in that way. No, sir. (By the Court.) This raise was made by the board of equalization without notice? A. Yes, sir; just a flat raise by the board of equalization. Q. (By Mr. Caldwell.) That equalized the values of the several wards in the city? A. Yes, sir. (By the Court.) Wasn't raised at your instance? A. No, sir." It also appears that the witness was the county assessor and a member of the board of equalization, and this was all of the evidence offered or received at the trial.

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When the jurisdiction of a *quasi* judicial tribunal is once established, its subsequent proceedings are presumed to be regular. And so the rule is that, where a taxpayer appeals to the district court from the action of the board of equalization in the matter of the assessment of property for taxation, the burden is on the appellant to show that the decision of the board is erroneous. A contrary holding would impose on the district court the duty of making an original assessment of the property of the county. *Frost v. Board of Review*, 113 Ia. 547. It will be observed that the witness stated no facts on which to base an opinion that the action of the board was incorrect. The substance of his testimony is that he would not have made the raise of 10 per cent. on the assessed valuation of the real estate in the Fifth ward, but he gives no reason for his statement. He gives no facts as to the assessed value of property in any other precinct of the city or county, but merely states that the raise did not make the assessed valuation of the city precincts or wards any more uniform than it was before such increase was made. There is nothing in the testimony by which a comparison of values between the different wards of the city and the different precincts of the county can be made, and the court was not justified in allowing the individual opinion of the witness to prevail over the collective judgment of the members of the board of equalization, of which he was a constituent part, and whose conclusion he had, without objection, officially agreed to. Again, an examination of the petition satisfies us that it is insufficient to sustain the judgment of the trial court. To be sure, it contains an allegation that the increase complained of was needlessly, unjustly and arbitrarily made, but such allegations are the conclusions of the pleader, and not statements of facts. So, we are satisfied that neither the appellant's petition nor the evidence adduced by him was sufficient to sustain the judgment of the district court.

Complaint is also made of the finding that notice of the meeting or action of the board of equalization in ordering

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the increase should have been given to the real estate owners of the Fifth ward. We are satisfied from an examination of the authorities that no such notice was necessary. Section 121, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1903, provides, among other things, that "the county board shall hold a session of not less than three nor more than twenty days for the purpose contemplated in this section, commencing on the first Tuesday after the second Monday of June each year." This is a sufficient notice to all taxpayers of the board's meetings. If the appellant, or any other taxpayer in the county, feared that the board would make any order detrimental to his interest, it was his duty to be there to protest. In the recent case of *Hacker v. Howe*, 72 Neb. 385, it was said:

"No notice is required, other than that given by statute, of the time and place of meeting or of action taken by the state board in the equalization of the assessments of property of the different counties." In the body of the opinion Chief Justice HOLCOMB says: "With reference to the alleged want of notice of the meeting of the state board of equalization, none is required. The section under which the board acted fixes the time and place of the meeting, and this of itself is sufficient notice, even though one were required, to the different counties and all persons interested, of the time and place of such meeting. By this statute all are warned as to when the meeting will occur, and the nature of the action which may be taken in pursuance of the power therein conferred upon the board. This section meets all legal requirements as to public notice, and no additional duty devolves upon the board to notify any of the time and place of its meeting, or of its contemplated action when convened for the purposes contemplated by the statute."

*Hallo v. Helmer*, 12 Neb. 87, is a case directly in point. It is there held that, where the valuation of property, as returned by the assessor, as to the entire precinct or tax district is relatively too low or too high, it may be raised or lowered by the board of equalization without notice pre-

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viously given to property owners. So, it seems that no notice of the action of the board was required, and the holding of the trial court to the contrary constitutes reversible error. It is contended, however, by the defendant in error that the allegations of his petition were confessed for want of answer, and therefore the plaintiff cannot be heard to complain of the judgment of the trial court. This contention is not well founded: First, because, as we have heretofore stated, his petition did not state sufficient facts to entitle him to the relief prayed for; and, second, the cause was tried in the district court as though an answer was unnecessary. Judgment was not taken *pro confesso* for want of an answer to the petition, but a trial was had in which the appellees objected to the introduction of any evidence, or, in effect, demurred to the petition *ore tenus*; the demurrer was overruled, and the appellant in order to make his case produced his witness, whose evidence was taken, and the judgment of the trial court was based alone on such evidence. So, the failure of the appellees to answer in the court below does not deprive them of the right to review the judgment of that tribunal.

It is further contended by the defendant in error that the finding of fact made by the board was not sufficient to sustain its order. An examination of the statute discloses that it makes no provision for a finding of any kind. It is made the duty of the board, among other things, to ascertain whether the valuation in one township, precinct or district bears just relation to all townships, precincts or districts in the county, and to increase or diminish the aggregate valuation of property in any township, precinct or district by adding or deducting such sum upon the hundred as may be necessary to produce a just relation between all the valuations of the property in the county. The record recites, in effect, that the board ascertained the necessary facts, and such finding was sufficient to authorize the board to act.

So, we are of opinion that defendant's contention cannot be sustained, and, for the errors above mentioned, the judg-

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ment of the district court is reversed and the cause is remanded for further proceedings in accordance with this opinion.

**REVERSED.**

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**CHARLES O. WHEDON, APPELLANT, v. LANCASTER COUNTY  
ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,406.

**Taxation: Levy: Appeal.** The statutes of this state make no provision for an appeal from the order of the county board in making the tax levy provided for by section 136, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1903; and an attempt to prosecute such an appeal confers no jurisdiction on the district court to review such order.

**APPEAL** from the district court for Lancaster county:  
**EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE.** *Affirmed.*

*Charles O. Whedon, pro se.*

*J. L. Caldwell, F. M. Tyrrell and Charles E. Matson,  
contra.*

**BARNES, J.**

The facts presented by this appeal are substantially as follows: It appears that the board of equalization of Lancaster county completed its labors for the year 1904 within the time fixed by statute, and thereafter, on the 7th day of July, the county board levied taxes to the amount of 15 mills on the dollar of the assessed valuation of the property of said county. No objections were made to such levy, and no complaint in relation thereto was ever filed with or presented to said board by any one. On the 21st day of July, 1904, one Charles O. Whedon, a resident taxpayer of said county, gave notice of an appeal to the district court from the order constituting such levy of taxes, filed his bond, obtained a transcript of the proceeding in question, filed the same in the district court for said county,

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and caused his appeal to be docketed by the clerk of said court. Thereafter, and in due time, he filed his petition, setting forth, in substance, the assessed valuation of the county for the year 1903, the amount of the taxes for that year, together with a statement of the sum of money necessary to properly conduct the business of the county, and alleged that the levy for 1903 was largely in excess of the amount necessary to properly conduct the county affairs. The petition also contained a statement of the assessed valuation of the property of the county for the year 1904, the amount of the levy complained of, the sum of money that such levy would produce in each of the several funds of the county, the amount necessary to conduct its governmental affairs, and alleged that the levy was excessive, extravagant, exorbitant and illegal, because there would be raised thereby a sum of money largely in excess of the needs of the county. Without quoting the petition, it is sufficient to say that it contained averments which were probably sufficient to constitute a cause of action to restrain the board from making a portion of the tax levy in question, or to recover taxes levied for an illegal purpose where paid under protest. The appellees, including the county board, demurred to the appellant's petition on the ground, among others, that the district court was without jurisdiction of the subject matter of the appeal. The demurrer was sustained for the reason, as stated in the judgment of the district court, "that the law does not authorize an appeal from the levy of taxes made by the board of county commissioners." The appellant excepted, elected to stand on his petition, declined to further plead, and judgment was rendered against him dismissing the appeal at his costs. From that judgment he brings the case to this court under our present statute regulating appeals.

The appellant contends that the statutes authorize an appeal from such levy, while the appellees insist that the law makes no such provision; and this is the principal question for our consideration. The right of appeal in this state is purely statutory, and, unless the statute provides

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for an appeal from the decision of a *quasi* judicial tribunal, such right does not exist. With this rule in view, we come to examine the statutes defining the powers and duties of the county board in the matter of taxation, and the provisions contained in the present revenue law relating to appeals from the orders of that tribunal. Section 120, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1903, provides that "the county board, the county assessor, and county-clerk, shall constitute the county board of equalization, and the county clerk shall be the clerk of said board." Section 121 provides for a session of the board, defines its powers and duties in regard to the equalization of the county assessments before the tax levy is made, and limits the duration of such session. It is provided by section 124 that "appeals may be taken from any action of the county board of equalization to the district court within twenty days after its adjournment, in the same manner as appeals are now taken from the action of the county board in the allowance or disallowance of claims against the county." And it is further provided that "the court shall hear the appeal as in equity and without a jury, and determine anew all questions raised before the board which relate to the liability of the property to assessment, or the amount thereof, and any decision rendered therein shall be certified by the clerk of the court to the county clerk, who shall correct the assessment books in his office accordingly." This is the only provision authorizing an appeal from the orders of the county board of equalization. Section 136 provides that "on the last day of sitting as a board of equalization the county board (not the board of equalization) shall levy the necessary taxes for the current year, including all county, township, city, school district, precinct, village, road district, and other taxes required by law to be certified to the county clerk and levied by the county board." A careful examination of our present revenue law discloses that it contains no provision for an appeal from the order of the county board in making the tax levy. We therefore conclude that it was not the inten-

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tion of the legislature to allow a taxpayer to appeal from such order. In *Keokuk & Hamilton Bridge Co. v. People*, 185 Ill. 276, construing a statute very much like our own, the court said:

“An appeal cannot be prosecuted as of right, but only when authorized or granted by the statute. The provision \* \* \* (of the statute) which provides for an appeal to test the correctness of the decision of the board on one, only, of the contentions committed to it to decide, is a denial, by implication, of the right to appeal from any other of the decisions of the board.”

The same rule, in substance, was announced in *Dutton v. Board of Review*, 188 Ill. 386, and *In re Appeal of Wilmerton*, 206 Ill. 15. The reason for our conclusion is made clear by what was said by Chief Justice HOLCOMB in *Hacker v. Howe*, 72 Neb. 385, where we find the following:

“An assessment means the determination of the value of a man’s property for the purpose of levying a tax; an official listing of persons and property with an estimate of the value of the property of each for purposes of taxation. 3 Cyc. 1111.”

This clearly distinguishes the act of assessment from the order constituting the tax levy. A proper and legal assessment must first be made, and the value of the taxable property of the county must be thus ascertained as a basis for the subsequent act of levying sufficient taxes to conduct the governmental affairs of the state, the county and its several municipalities. So, the statute providing for an appeal from the decision of the board of equalization in certain matters of assessment can have no application whatever to the subsequent action of the county board by which the tax is levied. This would seem to be the view entertained by the supreme court of Iowa in construing a statute very like our own. *City Council of City of Marion v. National Loan & Investment Co.*, 122 Ia. 629. Speaking of a case where the jurisdiction of the court depended on the right to appeal, the supreme court of Iowa said:

“No presumption can be entertained to the effect that

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jurisdiction as to the subject-matter appealed from exists. The record must show it. As in the case of an appeal to this court, we can proceed only when it appears as an affirmative fact, established by matter of record, that a judgment has been rendered from which an appeal may be taken. And consent of parties—much less, mere silence on the part of the appellee—cannot be accepted as sufficient to take the place of a record showing the essential fact of jurisdiction." *Green v. Ronen*, 59 Ia. 83; *Groves v. Richmond*, 58 Ia. 54.

Again, it would seem clear that the legislature never intended to confer jurisdiction upon the courts by appeal to review or control the discretion of the county board in the matter of levying taxes. To grant the district court such powers would, in effect, substitute its discretion for that of the county board, the tribunal to which the statute has specifically committed that duty. So, we are of opinion that the right of appeal to the district court from an order of the county board in making the necessary tax levy under the provisions of section 137, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1903, does not exist, and therefore that court was without jurisdiction to hear and determine the matters set forth in the appellant's petition.

It follows that the judgment of the district court in sustaining the demurrer and dismissing the appeal herein was right, and it is therefore

**AFFIRMED.**

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**SAMUEL PARKER v. STATE OF NEBRASKA.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,592.

**Instructions to the jury must be based upon and applicable to the evidence; and where in the trial of a criminal case an instruction is given without testimony to sustain it, and prejudice results thereby, a new trial will be granted.**

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ERROR to the district court for Thurston county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*W. S. Summers* and *Thomas L. Sloan*, for plaintiff in error.

*Norris Brown, Attorney General*, and *W. T. Thompson, contra.*

BARNES, J.

Samuel Parker was tried in the district court for Thurston county on an information charging him with murder in the first degree for the killing of one Andrew Johnson. He was found guilty of the crime of manslaughter, and sentenced to the state penitentiary for a term of five years. From that judgment and sentence he prosecutes error, and will be hereafter called the accused.

His first contention is that the trial court erred in overruling his motion to quash the jury panel. The grounds of such motion were: First, that a large number of the citizens, taxpayers and residents of Thurston county are Indians, and were objected to and excluded from the jury list from which the panel was drawn for that reason alone; that, he being an Indian, such action amounted to a denial of his rights under the laws and the constitution of this state and of the United States. Second, that one of the officers who participated in selecting the jury was a non-resident of Thurston county, and disqualified from acting in that capacity. It appears that his motion was supported by affidavit evidence, and an examination of the record discloses that such affidavits are not embraced in or made a part of the bill of exceptions, and whatever showing there was in support of the motion is contained in the transcript. The evidence not having been preserved in the manner provided by law, and according to our well-established rules of practice, it cannot be considered by this court, and therefore we are unable to determine this question. *Wright v. State*, 45 Neb. 44.

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It is also contended that the court erred in receiving the evidence of the witness Maggie Martin, for the reason that she was wholly unacquainted with the nature and sanctity of an oath. Her preliminary examination leaves her competency doubtful, to say the least, but we are not required to determine this question for reasons which will hereafter appear.

It is further claimed that the court erred in instructing the jury, on his own motion, as follows: "9. You are instructed that a party charged in the unlawful killing of a human being cannot avail himself of the claim of necessary self-defense, or defense of family, if the necessity for such defense was brought on by his own deliberate, wrongful act. Therefore, if the jury believe from the evidence that the defendant sought, brought on, or voluntarily entered into a difficulty with the deceased, Andrew Johnson, for the purpose of wreaking vengeance upon him, or to accomplish some unlawful purpose, or if the jury should find and believe from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that he killed the deceased at a time when he had, because of the acts of the deceased or those with the deceased, no reasonable apprehension of immediate and impending injury to himself or family, and did so to accomplish some unlawful purpose, or did it from a spirit of retaliation and revenge, then the defendant cannot avail himself of the law of self-defense." The jury were further told in substance, by instruction No. 10: "If from all of the evidence they should find, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant had no reason to believe that the deceased, Andrew Johnson, intended to take the life of his father or inflict upon him great bodily harm, and that the defendant struck the fatal blow in revenge, or in a reckless spirit, the defendant was not entitled to claim exemption from punishment on the ground of self-defense, or defense of his father."

Many of the witnesses in this case were Indians, and their evidence was delivered through an interpreter. Some of it is hardly intelligible; but it fairly establishes the

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following: The deceased, together with his wife and his two daughters, was visiting the father of the accused at his place of residence during the afternoon of the day when the difficulty, which probably caused his death, occurred. The accused was absent from home during all that day until a short time before the affray in question took place. The father of the accused had two or three bottles of whiskey, and, when the deceased and his family arrived at his place, produced them. They all drank copiously of the liquor, and were more or less intoxicated when the accused came upon the scene. It is fairly inferable from the evidence that the two families had been friends for many years, and no difficulty of any kind had occurred between them until after the accused returned. About that time the deceased and his family prepared to leave for their home, but he was so intoxicated that he was hardly able to go from the house to the wagon, so the accused assisted him to where the team stood, and tried to lift him into the wagon. The deceased in attempting to climb into the vehicle fell to the ground, and one of its wheels ran over him. This apparently caused him to become angry, and he laid hold of the accused and commenced to bite him. In order to make him desist, the accused choked the deceased, and thereupon the wife laid hold of the accused, pulled his hair, choked him, and tore his shirt off. He thereupon turned his attention to the woman. The deceased, having by this time become partially sober and able to help himself, obtained the possession of a neck-yoke, and commenced an assault upon the father of the accused, chasing him, as the evidence shows, at least two or three times around a cultivator, which stood there, finally overtaking him; and the son, seeing the danger the father was in, came to his assistance. He succeeded in wresting the neck-yoke from the deceased, and struck him with it. Johnson thereupon fell to the ground, was afterwards taken home, and was found to be quite badly injured. He died some nine days afterwards, either from the effects of the blow or from blood poisoning caused by

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his wounds. We find no testimony in the record which shows, or tends to show, that the accused brought on the difficulty, that he was actuated by any hatred of the deceased, or that he cherished any spirit of ill will or revenge toward him. On the contrary, the evidence seems to show that the parties were friends until the very moment when the affray commenced. So, the real question for the jury was whether the accused used more force than was necessary, or than would have appeared to be necessary under the circumstances to a careful, prudent and considerate man, in the defense of his father. This being true, the giving of the instruction above quoted was reversible error. The tendency of the instruction was to lead the jury to believe that there was some evidence from which the element of hatred, revenge or ill will could be attributed to the accused, and thus deprive him, as stated by the court, of the right of self-defense, or defense of his father. The instruction complained of is in almost the identical language which we disapproved in the case of *Blair v. State*, 72 Neb. 368, where it was said:

"It is a well-settled rule that the instructions must be based on the evidence, and where an instruction has been given without any testimony to support it, and prejudice results thereby, it is reversible error."

The record contains many other assignments of error, but as the judgment must be reversed for those which we have heretofore discussed, they will not be considered, and it may be presumed that upon a retrial of the case they will be avoided by the trial court.

For the foregoing reasons the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause is remanded for a new trial.

**REVERSED.**

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State v. Dailey.

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STATE OF NEBRASKA V. HENRY F. DAILEY.

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,613.

**Penal Statute: CONSTRUCTION.** The provisions of a penal statute will not be extended by construction so as to apply to persons not clearly within its terms.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: GEO. A. DAY, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, W. W. Slabaugh and C. E. Foster*, for plaintiff in error.

*Gurley, Crawford & Woodrough, contra.*

LETTON, J.

Henry F. Dailey was charged, as agent of the owner, with refusing to erect and maintain certain fire escapes in the manner provided by law upon a certain building in the city of Omaha. He filed a special demurrer to the information. This demurrer was sustained by the district court and the defendant discharged. The county attorney excepted to this action, and brings the case to this court for review, alleging error on the part of the court below in sustaining the demurrer.

The information in substance charged that the defendant, being an agent of one Knox, the owner of the Winona building, having been duly notified by the deputy labor commissioner to erect and provide three single wrought iron or steel balcony stair fire escapes on the rear of said building, did unlawfully refuse to comply with such notice, and to place or cause to be placed on said building such fire escapes as provided by law. The defendant does not question the sufficiency of the statute as far as it purports to prescribe a rule of civil conduct for those in actual control of the kind of buildings mentioned in the act. The only question is as to the validity of that part of the act

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which makes it a misdemeanor for the agent to fail to erect fire escapes after notice has been served upon him. The power given to the labor commissioner to serve a notice upon the "owner or owners, trustees, or lessees, their agents or the occupant of any building" is not a delegation of legislative power, as the defendant contends, but is merely a method prescribed for calling to the attention of the persons interested in the building the fact that the owners have failed to perform their legal duty. The power of supervision and inspection must be vested in some officer, and the labor commissioner has been clothed with it. The object of the notice is to allow grace to the persons interested before enforcement by prosecution. In contemplation of law, a building of the character described in the act, which is unprovided with proper and reasonable methods for the egress of its occupants in case of fire, is a nuisance, and the agencies which are customarily employed for the suppression and abatement of nuisances are proper to be used in such case. The police powers of the state are properly called into exercise for this purpose. These powers are not and need not be uniform in their operation or methods, the enforcement varying in method, and the penalty in character, as in the judgment of the legislature seems best adapted to accomplish the desired result; but the provisions of this act, at least so far as concern the agent, seem defective. That part of the act, the consideration of which is involved in this case, is as follows: "It shall be the duty of said commissioner of labor or his deputy to serve a written notice in behalf of the people of the state of Nebraska upon the owner or owners, trustees, or lessees, their agents or the occupant of any building within this state, not provided with fire escapes in accordance with the provisions of this act, commanding such owner, trustee, lessee or occupant, or either of them, to place or cause to be placed upon such building such fire escape or escapes as is provided for in section four (4) of this act, within thirty (30) days after the service of such notice." Comp. St. 1905, ch. 30, sec. 17

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(Ann. St. 6361). And section 18: "Any such owner or owners, trustee, lessee or occupant or either of them, or their agents, so served with notice as aforesaid, who shall not, within sixty (60) days after the service of such notice upon him or them, place or cause to be placed such fire escape or escapes upon such building as required by this act and the terms of such notice, shall be subject to a fine of not less than twenty-five or more than two hundred dollars, and to a further fine of fifty dollars for each additional week of neglect to comply with such notice." The object of the law evidently is to compel the owner of the building to provide fire escapes. It is made the duty of the labor commissioner to serve a written notice upon the "owner or owners, trustees, or lessees, their agents, or the occupant" of the defective building. This notice, while it may be served upon the agent, commands "such owner, trustee, lessee or occupant, or either of them," to provide fire escapes within 30 days after the service of the notice. It will be observed that the notice does not command or require the *agent* to place the fire escape upon the building. By the next section it is provided that "any such owner or owners, trustee, lessee or occupant or either of them, or their agents, so served with notice as aforesaid," who shall not provide the fire escapes "as required by this act and the terms of such notice" shall be punished as therein provided. There is an evident inconsistency between these two sections. The notice required by the first section does not command the agent to furnish the fire escape, but by the second section the agent is to be punished for not erecting such a fire escape as is required by the terms of such notice. The intention of the legislature evidently was to permit the notice commanding the owner to provide the fire escapes to be served upon the agent, since he might be more readily accessible than the owner, but to require the owner to perform the duty of furnishing the fire escapes. In the case of *Arms v. Ayer*, 192 Ill. 601, the Illinois statute, of which the Nebraska statute is almost a verbatim copy, was considered by the

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supreme court of Illinois as far as it provided for civil damages, and it was held that the reasonable intendment is that the owner or owners of the building shall perform the duty of furnishing the fire escapes.

It is argued by the state that the purpose of the act may be defeated by holding that the agent may not be held liable criminally for the default of his principal, but we must construe the law as we find it. The purpose of the act is a proper one, but whether its terms afford the most efficacious remedy for the evil which it is sought to right may be questioned. It might perhaps be competent for the legislature to provide that a building unequipped with fire escapes should be deemed a nuisance and that no persons should be permitted to occupy the same, whether as the owner, tenant, agent, or in any other capacity, until it had been placed in a condition of safety. Similar provisions have been adopted in other states to reach nonresident owners of defective buildings. Any reasonable means, not in conflict with the constitution, which the legislature may adopt to prevent such terrible calamities as have happened in the past from the failure of property owners to provide proper means of escape from fire, ought to receive the favorable consideration of the courts. We cannot, however, extend the provisions of a penal statute to persons to whom it is at least doubtful it was intended to apply.

The judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**IN RE JOHN SCHWARTING.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,676.

- 1. Dipsomaniac Law: CONSPICTION.** The provisions of chapter 82, laws 1905 (Comp. St. 1905, ch. 40, secs. 62-69), known as the "Dipsomaniac Law," are *in pari materia* with other laws providing for the detention, care and discharge of persons committed to the hospital for the insane, and must be construed in connection therewith.

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2. **Discharged Patient.** A person who has been confined in the hospital for the insane under the provisions of said act until he has been cured may not be subjected to further restraint without new cause.
3. **Constitutional Law.** Section 7, ch. 82, laws 1905, held unconstitutional, as in violation of the right to personal liberty.

ORIGINAL application for writ of habeas corpus. Writ denied.

*O. A. Williams*, for applicant.

*Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson*, for the state.

LETTON, J.

This is an application for a writ of habeas corpus, representing that John Schwarting is unlawfully deprived of his liberty by Dr. J. L. Greene, superintendent of the hospital for the insane at Lincoln, Nebraska, upon the charge of being an inebriate. It appears that the petitioner has been adjudged by the commissioners of insanity of Antelope county to be an inebriate, and to be a fit subject for custody and treatment in the hospital for the insane, and that he has been committed to such institution until he is cured, or for a period not exceeding three years. The petitioner contends that chapter 82, laws 1905, being "An act providing for the examination of dipsomaniacs, inebriates and persons addicted to the excessive use of morphine, cocaine or other narcotic drugs; for the detention, care and treatment of such persons and for their parole," is unconstitutional and void for the reasons that the law is contrary to the provisions of section 1 of the fourteenth amendment to the constitution of the United States, in that it abridges the privileges and immunities of citizens of the United States, and because it is a law denying to certain persons the equal protection of the law, and because it provides for imprisonment without due process of law and without trial by jury.

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The act under which the petitioner was committed to the insane hospital is supplementary or additional to the statutes which provide for the treatment of the insane, and the establishment and maintenance of hospitals for the reception of that unfortunate class of individuals. It is an exercise of the paternal care of the state, designed for the benefit of those persons whose mental fibre has become so weakened by the excessive use of intoxicants and narcotics that they are unable to refrain from an undue indulgence in the same, and in whom the craving has become so intense as to be in the nature of a mental infirmity. From an early period the law has assumed the care and protection of the property of persons who have become unfit, on account of excessive drinking or debauchery, to control or manage the same, to their own detriment or that of the public. This jurisdiction is assumed as a part of the duty of the state to protect society from the burden which might be imposed upon it if, by the improvidence of the individual, he or his family should be so reduced in circumstances as to become a public charge. Comp. St. 1903, ch. 34, secs. 17, 21, 40 (Ann. St. 5387, 5391, 5410). This act extends this care to the person as well as to the property of the defective individual, and is designed to protect both the individual himself, and other persons who may be exposed to injury from his conduct, from the consequences which may reasonably be anticipated if he should be left at liberty to gratify his abnormal cravings. But this power should be exercised with great caution and only upon such a state of facts being shown as would justify the forcible intervention of the state for the protection of persons and property. "While the state should take compassionate charge of any who are dangerous to themselves or others, it is equally bound to protect the personal rights and liberties of every harmless and law-abiding citizen, capable of taking care of himself, his family, and his property, however weak and unfortunate he may be in other respects." *State v. Ryan*, 70 Wis. 676.

The power conferred in the first place upon the commis-

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*In re Schwartling.*

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sioners of insanity is great, and the responsibility is great in proportion. The right to liberty is sacred, and should not be taken from any person under the provisions of this act without careful investigation and just and impartial consideration of the testimony, and unless the facts shown are serious enough in nature to warrant detention for treatment, he should not be committed. The act is for the dipsomaniac and inebriate, not for the occasional drinker, even though his drinking may result in intoxication. The first section of the act provides that these patients "shall be admitted, detained, cared for and treated in the Nebraska hospital for the insane," and by the second section it is provided that "the commissioners of insanity, in each organized county of the state, shall have cognizance of all applications for admission to the hospital on behalf of such persons and shall have the same powers and exercise the same jurisdiction as are conferred upon them in the case of an insane person." Further provisions of the act provide for applications for the admission of patients, and the examination and commitment to the hospital. These provisions are examined and set forth in the recent case of *In re Simmons*, *ante*, p. 639, in which case it was held that, when a citizen is charged with being a dipsomaniac or inebriate, there must be a trial and findings of fact, and a record of the trial and findings kept with sufficient formality to show the jurisdiction of the commissioners in the premises, and to show the action that was taken by the commissioners upon the complaint, and that the commissioners found the facts to exist that would require such commitment. The act further provides for the treatment of the patient in a separate ward at the hospital and for the nature of the treatment to be given. Section 7 of the act provides in substance that any patient whom the superintendent of said hospital believes to be cured may be paroled upon certain conditions, among which are that the patient sign a written pledge agreeing to refrain from the use of all intoxicating liquors as a beverage, and from the use of morphine, cocaine and narcotic drugs during the

period of his commitment, and shall avoid frequenting places and the association with people tending to lead him to the same, and requires him to make written reports on the first of each month to the fact that he has not during the past month in any respect violated any of the terms of his parol, which reports must be investigated and approved by the clerk of the commissioners of insanity of the county in which the patient resides, and if he fails at any time to make such report or to fulfil all of its conditions upon which the parol was granted, he may, without any further proceeding whatever, and on the written order of the superintendent of the hospital, be taken and returned to the hospital, there to be detained and treated as before.

The petitioner contends that the act is penal in its nature, because it provides for a commitment for a definite number of years, and that, when cured, he can only be released upon the performance of the conditions above set forth; that he may arbitrarily be returned without process of law upon the whim of the superintendent, and that the act therefore violates the constitutional provisions safeguarding the liberty of the person. We are convinced that there is much merit in these strictures upon that portion of the law which provides for the partial restraint of the patient after he has been cured, and which provide that he may be returned to the hospital, without further procedure, on the written order of the superintendent. The law is not enacted to punish crime, and is by no means penal in its nature. While a period is fixed beyond which the detention may not go, this term is fixed with the idea that, if the patient cannot be cured within the space of three years, his case is not capable of remedy by such treatment and he should not be further detained. The time of detention is fixed in the interests of liberty, and not as a term of imprisonment or confinement as a punishment. But, while this is true, we know of no power residing in the legislature to impose restraint upon the personal liberty of an indi-

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vidual after he has been restored to health and to the control of his appetites by the treatment afforded him under the provisions of the act. When he is cured he stands upon an equality with all other citizens. The legislature, however beneficent its motives may be, is restrained by the provisions of the constitution from interfering with his personal liberty, and, in so far as these provisions of section 7 provide for the restraint of persons who have been cured, they are in conflict with the constitution and must fall.

It is further contended that an inebriate has no right by statute for a retrial anywhere as to whether he is an inebriate, and that he has neither appeal, habeas corpus, nor error to protect his rights. We think, however, that counsel overlooks the fact that this act must be read in connection with the provisions of the act for the government of the hospital for the insane, which defines the legal relations of insane persons and provides for their care and protection. Comp. St. 1903, ch. 40, secs. 1-58 (Ann. St. 9590-9647). The act provides that all persons in the insane hospital shall be regarded as standing on an equal footing, and that upon a statement in writing, verified by affidavit, addressed to a judge of the district court for the county in which the hospital is situated or of the county in which any persons confined in the hospital has his or her legal settlement, alleging that such person is not insane and is unjustly deprived of his or her liberty, a commission shall be appointed by the judge, who shall proceed to the hospital and investigate the facts; that such commission may be repeated not oftener than once in six months. The act further provides that all persons confined as insane shall be entitled to the benefit of the writ of habeas corpus, and a later act provides that every inmate of the hospital shall be allowed to write letters when and whenever he or she desires, and to any person he or she may choose. While counsel contend that the act which is now assailed has none of these necessary and humane provisions, we are

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of opinion that, since they are to be found in the general laws with reference to the government and management of the hospital for the insane, it was unnecessary to repeat them in a subsequent act which merely adds another class of unfortunates to that which was formerly entitled to treatment in the institution.

It is contended that the provisions with reference to the release of persons is inadequate, but if the unconstitutional restraints with reference to the liberty of the patient after he has been cured, which are imposed by section 7, are exercised from the act, the patient has the same remedy which is provided for all other persons unlawfully restrained of their liberty. The commitment provides for the detention in the hospital until the patient is cured. The general law relating to the control of the hospital provides that any person who is cured shall be immediately discharged by the superintendent. The detention therefore of a person who is cured would be an unlawful restraint, and the patient thus restrained can be released by the ordinary remedies provided by law for such purpose.

No law conceived by human minds can be said to be perfect in all details, and this act is no exception to the rule. Its purpose is a good one, and it is intended to benefit the unfortunate individuals described in the first section thereof, as well as to protect society in general from the evils flowing from the reckless conduct of inebriates. Whether or not in its operation it will attain the results desired is a question which the future alone can determine, and whether or not it shall continue in effect remains a matter for legislative discretion. In so far, however, as its provisions are not violative of constitutional provisions, it is our duty to uphold the law. We are of the opinion that section 7 of the act, imposing conditions upon the discharge of a patient when cured, is an unlawful and unconstitutional restraint upon the liberty of a person and is beyond the power of the legislature to enact. We think, however, that the remainder

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of the act, when considered in connection with the general act for the government of the hospital for the insane, is not subject to the complaint made by the petitioner.

The demurrer of the respondent is therefore sustained, and the application

DENIED.

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MIDA A. BRANSON, APPELLANT, v. ISAAC R. BRANSON,  
APPELLEE.

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,167.

**Divorce: Collusion.** An agreement between the parties to a pending suit for a divorce for the collusive rendition of a decree therefor will defeat the action, and it is immaterial that one of the parties may have supposed such agreement to be free from legal or moral wrong.

APPEAL from the district court for Hamilton county:  
BENJAMIN F. GOOD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*J. A. Whitmore and J. H. Edmondson, for appellant.*

*R. D. Stearns, contra.*

AMES, C.

Appellant was plaintiff in the court below in an action for a divorce. While the action was pending she entered into a written agreement with her husband to the effect that, "in consideration of the said defendant, Isaac R. Branson, not going personally upon the witness stand to testify against Mida A. Branson in her suit against him for divorce," she would make no application in said suit for either temporary or permanent alimony, and that, in case a divorce should be granted, the plaintiff should have set apart to her certain articles of personal property and certain moneys, which she claimed as her

separate estate, and she should execute to her husband a formal release and quitclaim of all dower estate, or other rights or interests in his lands and personal property by reason of the marriage or otherwise. This agreement was identified by the wife in the course of her cross-examination as a witness upon the trial and brought to the attention of the court, who thereupon dismissed the suit. The character of this document as an agreement for a collusive divorce is too evident to require comment, and that the existence of such an agreement will defeat the action is elementary. *Gentry v. Gentry*, 67 Mo. App. 550; *Adams v. Adams*, 25 Minn. 72; *Phillips v. Thorp*, 10 Ore. 491; *Thompson v. Thompson*, 70 Mich. 62; 1 Nelson, Divorce and Separation, secs. 502-506. Testimony by the plaintiff seeking to explain her motives in entering into the agreement, if competent at all, emphasizes rather than refutes the idea, expressed in the writing itself, that her sole object sought to be obtained thereby was the facilitating and expediting of the rendition of a decree of divorce. It is immaterial that the plaintiff may have supposed such an act free from legal or moral wrong. The evidence discloses that the agreement was entered into by the plaintiff voluntarily and deliberately in the presence of her counsel and of another person, who subscribed his name to the document as a witness. Her own explanation of her conduct is that her husband had repeatedly importuned herself and counsel to enter into such an agreement, and that she finally consented so to do in order to be rid of his annoyance, and because she had not prayed in her petition, and had not intended to apply for, either permanent or temporary alimony or suit money, attorney's fees or other.

Counsel for plaintiff concedes in his argument that the agreement by its terms and upon its face is collusive, and would be effectual to defeat the action but for the foregoing explanation. To our minds the testimony of the wife is wholly insufficient to purge the document of its vice. If such a transaction could be validated by the oath of one,

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or even of both, of the parties that it was entered into without any real consideration and from morally pure or justifiable motives, means would be found to uphold it in every instance. We are of opinion that, when such an agreement has been executed deliberately and without trick or illusion as to its contents, its own recitals are conclusive to us to the purpose and intent of the parties thereto. As to the legal effect of such a document there can be no doubt. As is said in 2 Bishop, Marriage and Divorce, sec. 252: "However just a cause may be, if parties collude in its management, so that in real fact both are plaintiffs, while by the record the one appears as plaintiff and the other as defendant, it cannot go forward." And again in sec. 697: "Any agreement between the parties to withhold facts or evidence from the court, or to influence its decision by concealment or misrepresentation, is, as collusion, void." And in sec. 698: "So a wife's undertaking to accept \$500 in full for all her claims as wife or widow in her husband's property, coupled with her promise not to resist his divorce suit, should he bring one, to put him to no additional costs, and to make no claim for alimony, was held to be a mere nugatory attempt to defraud the court in which afterwards he should bring his suit." In *Adams v. Adams, supra*, the supreme court of Minnesota say:

"The authorities are uniform in holding that any contract between the parties, having for its object the dissolution of the marriage contract, or facilitating that result, such as an agreement by the defendant in a pending action for divorce, to withdraw his or her opposition, and to make no defense, is void as *contra bonos mores*."

The defendant observed the terms of his contract. He filed no answer in the action and did not appear therein as a witness. The only evidence in behalf of the plaintiff, except with respect to the execution of the agreement, was the testimony of the plaintiff herself. Section 38, ch. 25, Comp. St. 1905, enacts: "No decree of divorce and of the nullity of a marriage shall be made solely on the declarations, confessions or admissions of the parties, but the

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court shall in all cases require other satisfactory evidence of the facts alleged in the bill for that purpose." In view of this statute and of the collusive agreement to suppress the testimony of the defendant, the correctness of the judgment of the district court is not open to question, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

**AFFIRMED.**

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**CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY RAILROAD COMPANY v.  
ELIZABETH A. HEALY.\***

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,252.

**Election of Remedies.** A suit by an administrator of a deceased employee of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, who was a member of the relief department of that company, to recover damages, under the statute, for wrongfully or negligently causing the death of such employee, is a bar to a subsequent action upon the membership certificate in said department, when the administrator is the same person named as beneficiary in the contract.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

*J. W. Deceese, W. S. Morlan and F. E. Bishop*, for plaintiff in error.

*T. J. Doyle, contra.*

**AMES, C.**

This is an action upon a certificate of membership issued to one Cornelius R. Healy in the insurance organization known as the "Burlington Relief Department." The per-

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\*Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 786, *post*.

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son named as beneficiary was his wife, Elizabeth A. Healy, now defendant in error herein. He lost his life by accident while in the service of the railroad company, leaving surviving him four minor children besides his widow, the plaintiff below. She was appointed administratrix, and began and prosecuted an action against the company to recover damages, under the statute, for the alleged wrongful or negligent causing of the death of the insured. From the verdict and judgment in her favor, the company prosecuted error to this court, and secured a reversal on the ground that the evidence was insufficient to uphold the verdict. 5 Neb. (Unof.) 225. When the cause was remanded to the district court she voluntarily dismissed it without prejudice to a new action, and began the present suit in which she recovered a judgment sought to be reversed by this proceeding.

The contract of membership between the deceased and the plaintiff in error provides that all rights of recovery thereunder shall be forfeited and shall cease and determine "if any suit shall be brought against said (railroad) company, or any other company associated therewith as aforesaid, for damages arising out of injury or death occurring to me," the insured. There can be no doubt that the present case falls within the letter of the clause just quoted. But in *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Olsen*, 70 Neb. 559, this court, in discussing a contract identical with this, say that it "provides for the application of the well-settled rules of law in regard to election of remedies," and counsel for the defendant in error herein contend that her unsuccessful action against the railroad company was not an irrevocable election within the meaning of those rules. We doubt if the language just quoted was intended to be taken in its wholly unqualified sense. It was, we presume, used with reference to the circumstances then under discussion. In that case the plaintiff had, after his injury, accepted relief department benefits, and it was held that by so doing he had made an irrevocable election which barred him of a remedy against the company to recover damages for a

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negligent injury; but it was also held that his unsuccessful attempt to prosecute the action thus barred did not revoke his previous election to avail himself of his remedy upon his contract, or deprive him of the benefits accruing to him thereunder. Or, in other words, as the court say, his rights under the contract became, upon his receiving benefits thereunder, "absolutely fixed," and were not subject to subsequent forfeiture by the bringing of the ineffectual action in tort. There is no doubt in our minds of the soundness of this view. As the court say, the opposite rule would be "too unconscionable to be enforced by a court of justice." The applicability of this rule to those cases in which actions are brought by administrators, under the statute, for the recovery of damages for wrongfully or negligently causing the death of the deceased, appears to have been established by this court in those instances in which the administrator is the same person named as beneficiary in the contract of insurance. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Bigley*, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 225; *Walters v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, 74 Neb. 551.

This conclusion is, as we understand, justified solely upon the ground, above stated, that the administrator and beneficiary are the same person, and that her official character does not deprive her of the discretion, reserved in the contract, of choosing to which of two several remedies she will resort for compensation in damages for the act complained of. Or, perhaps, more correctly speaking, the beneficiary, upon her appointment and qualification as administratrix, succeeds to and becomes vested with the right and power of election of remedies which the deceased would have enjoyed had he survived the injury. From this premise it follows, of course, that if she does not receive or accept of such appointment she never occupies a position in which her rights can be impaired or affected by such an election or in which she can be required or entitled to make one; and, conversely, her prosecution of the contract obligation of the company to herself cannot impair or

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affect the right of the administrator to prosecute any claim to which he may deem himself entitled under the statute.

We conclude therefore that the case is substantially identical in principle with the former decisions of this court above cited, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed April 4, 1907. *Former judgment vacated and judgment of district court affirmed:*

1. Contracts: REMEDIES. Under a contract of membership in the relief department of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, which provided that the receipt of benefits by the beneficiary should bar all actions for damages arising from the death of the member, the beneficiary, after receiving the benefit provided for in the certificate of membership, cannot maintain an action to recover damage for herself caused by such death; but the receipt of such benefit will not bar her action as administratrix of the estate of the deceased for the benefit of her minor children.
2. ——: FORFEITURE: PUBLIC POLICY. The provision in a contract of membership in the relief department that, "if any suit at law shall be brought against said company for damages arising from or growing out of" the death of the member, the benefit otherwise payable shall thereby be forfeited, is against public policy and will not be enforced.

SEDGWICK, C. J.

The questions presented on this motion for rehearing have been thoroughly briefed and carefully presented. We have reexamined the decisions of this court construing contracts relating to membership in the defendant's relief department. In the former opinion in this case, *ante*,

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p. 783, it was decided that the commencement of an action against the defendant for damages by this plaintiff as administratrix of the estate of her husband worked a forfeiture of her rights as beneficiary in the certificate herein sued upon. Questions arising upon the construction of these contracts have been before this court in several cases, but we have never been called upon to adjudicate the precise question involved in this case, unless it be in *Walters v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, 74 Neb. 551. In that case the plaintiff was the mother of the deceased. There were no widow and children. The plaintiff, therefore, although she prosecuted her action for damages as administratrix of the estate of the deceased, prosecuted it solely in her own interest. She did not voluntarily dismiss her action, but after final judgment had been rendered against her in her action for damages she attempted to recover as beneficiary of the relief fund. It was held that her former action was a bar to such recovery. In the opinion in that case the distinction between the principles there involved and ordinary cases of election of remedy was pointed out and clearly stated. The sense in which the doctrine of election of remedies was applicable in *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Bigley*, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 225, and *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Olsen*, 70 Neb. 559, was also correctly stated. In those cases it was held that, when the beneficiary elected to take the benefits under the relief certificate, and actually received a part of the amount due under the beneficiary certificate, a subsequent ineffectual attempt to recover damages arising out of the negligence of the company would not prevent the collection of the remainder of the benefits under the certificate. It has been several times held by this court that one who has received benefits from the relief departments under his relief certificate cannot himself maintain an action for damages for the negligence of the company in causing the same injury which was the basis of his claim for benefits. *Clinton v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, 60 Neb. 692; *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Bell*, 44 Neb. 44; *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Curtis*, 51 Neb. 442.

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This was the situation in the *Olsen* case: When the defendant was sued for damages caused by its negligence, it answered that the plaintiff had elected to claim under his benefit certificate and had received a part of the benefits to which he was entitled, and so defeated his action for damages. After having defeated his action for damages upon that ground, it was not allowed to deny its liability under the benefit certificate.

In the case at bar the plaintiff as administratrix of the estate of the deceased represented her several minor children as well as herself. Her husband was killed while in the employ of the defendant company. She had good reason to believe, and she testified she did believe, that his death was caused by the negligence of the defendant. If it was so caused, it was her duty as administratrix to recover damages from the defendant in behalf of her minor children. This duty she attempted to perform. In an early case in this court it was determined that the widow, by accepting benefits from the relief department under a contract like the one in question, settled and barred her claim against the company for damages, but it was also held that such action on her part would not defeat the rights of her minor children. After having received benefits herself from the relief department, she might as administratrix prosecute an action for damages against the company in behalf of her minor children. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Wymore*, 40 Neb. 645. Speaking of that case, this court in *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Bell*, 44 Neb. 44, said: "In that case Wymore was a member of the relief department, and was killed through the negligence of the railroad company. After his death his widow accepted from the funds of the relief department the death benefit to which she was entitled by virtue of being Wymore's widow and his membership in the relief department. She then brought a suit as administratrix against the railroad company for damages for negligently killing her husband. This suit was brought under chapter 21 of the Compiled Statutes, 1893; and we held that the right of action conferred by

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the statute was for the benefit of the widow and next of kin of the deceased who had lost his life through the negligence of the railroad company, and that the acceptance by the widow of the death benefit from the funds of the relief department was a release and discharge of her cause of action against the railroad company given by that statute for her own benefit; but that neither Wymore's membership in the relief department, nor his contract with it, nor the acceptance of the death benefit by the widow, operated to bar or release her cause of action as administratrix against the railroad company in favor of Wymore's children. We adhere to that case."

In actions of this kind there is especial reason for adhering to the earlier decisions of the court. Contracts of employment and of membership in the relief department are being continually made, and it is of highest importance that the contracting parties shall so far as possible understand their respective rights and duties when entering upon such contracts. If the two cases last referred to are to be regarded as a correct exposition of the law, we suppose that from the language quoted it would follow that, if this plaintiff had prosecuted her action as administratrix for the benefit of the children alone, such action would not have been a bar to her claim upon the relief fund. She, however, made no such distinction in the action which she brought. She sought to recover damages for herself as well as for her children. If therefore she had collected and received such damages in that action it would, we suppose, under the principles announced in the cases referred to, have barred all her claims against the relief fund. She began her action for damages and recovered a substantial verdict against the defendant in the trial court. The judgment of the trial court was reversed upon proceedings in error in this court upon the ground that the evidence showed contributory negligence on the part of the deceased. The evidence showing such contributory negligence was the testimony of one of the employees of the defendant, who testified that the deceased was warned of

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peculiar dangers which he was incurring and was told to take precautions, which he failed to do, and knowledge of these facts was wholly in the possession of the defendant's agents. The plaintiff makes it appear that she could not and did not foresee that she would be confronted with such evidence, and that when she commenced her action for damages all the circumstances were such as to not only warrant her in bringing such action, but to make it her duty as administratrix so to do.

When the judgment for damages had been reversed by this court, the plaintiff at once dismissed her case without prejudice, and brought this action to recover under the benefit certificate. The question presented is whether the terms of the benefit certificate and the rules of the company, which were made a part of the contract, will under these circumstances prevent her recovery from the relief fund. That part of the contract relied upon for this purpose is in these words: "If any suit shall be brought against said company, or any other company associated therewith as aforesaid, for damages arising from or growing out of injury or death occurring to me, the benefits otherwise payable, and all obligations of said relief department and of said company created by my membership in said relief fund, shall thereupon be forfeited without any declaration or other act by said relief department or said company." It is contended that the construction of this language is that, if any suit for damages is brought by any party, the benefits payable to the beneficiary in the relief department are forfeited, whether such beneficiary participates in the action for damages or not; but this is not the meaning of the language used. The provision is that the person who brings the suit for damages against the company shall forfeit the right to the relief fund. Can the forfeiture provided for in this contract be enforced? The benefit provided for in the relief certificate did not depend upon the negligence of the company in causing the accident, nor upon the question of contributory negligence of the deceased. Even his gross negligence or his criminal

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conduct contributing to his death would not defeat the right of his widow to participate in this fund. The amount to which she is entitled is fixed by the contract. It became due her upon the death of her husband. It partakes of the nature of life insurance. It is not measured by the amount of her loss. The jury estimated the damages to which she was entitled as administratrix at \$3,500. When she began her action for damages she had reason to suppose that she ought to recover at least that amount from the defendant. She knew that she could obtain \$500 from the relief fund without trouble. By the death of her husband she was confronted by the alternative to either waive her right to damages and her right to enforce that claim in the courts, or to forfeit the \$500 which was hers and could be had for the asking. Her testimony shows that she realized the situation. Upon the advice of friends and her counsel she concluded that it was her duty to enforce her claim for damages. There can be no doubt that this was good advice as the claim then appeared. She attempted to enforce that claim, and, as soon as she ascertained that the facts were such that she could not enforce it, she dismissed her action and asked for her relief benefit. She is told that she has forfeited the \$500. The contract itself calls this a forfeiture and there is no doubt that it is correctly named. The deceased during his lifetime paid for this benefit out of his earnings. It is therefore as though he had deposited \$500 with the company upon the contract and agreement that he should go into the employment of the company, and that upon his death the \$500 should be paid to his widow, with the further provision that, if the widow should sue the company for damages upon an allegation of negligence in causing his death, the \$500 should be forfeited. She has a constitutional right that the courts shall be open to her to redress the grievance of negligently killing her husband and to litigate her claims predicated upon such negligence; but if she exercises that right she must under this contract suffer a forfeiture for so doing. If the company required its employees to deposit money with the

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company upon contract that, if such employee should afterwards be injured in the service of the company, and should bring an action for damages predicated upon the negligence of the company, the money so deposited should be forfeited, would such a contract be enforced? Can a party contract beforehand under penalty and forfeiture that he will not litigate a claim that may thereafter arise? The policy of our law is to furnish every citizen with speedy redress for any injury that he may receive in person or property, and a contract which essentially imposes a penalty upon seeking such redress is contrary to that policy. The decision in *Walters v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, *supra*, so far as it conflicts with the views herein expressed, is wrong and is overruled.

The former judgment entered in this cause is vacated and the judgment of the district court is affirmed.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

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RUTH BROWN ET AL. V. CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND & PACIFIC  
RAILWAY COMPANY.

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,289.

**Principal and Surety: DISCHARGE.** If a creditor to whom two persons are obligated, one as principal and the other as surety, release the former he also discharges the latter, and the same principle is applicable when the person released is, as to the creditor, a surety only, if he is known to be ultimately liable to the party not formally discharged. The creditor cannot intentionally deprive his debtor of his indemnity, and still hold him to his obligation.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Benjamin F. Johnson*, for plaintiff in error.

*Billingsley & Greene*, contra.

## AMES, C.

This case is now for a fifth time before this court, and for a history of it and of the circumstances out of which it arose reference is made to former opinions of the court in 64 Neb. 62, and 70 Neb. 696. In the last of these opinions it was held that the amended answer and supplemental answer of the railway company stated facts constituting a defense, especially the latter which pleaded a settlement, accord and satisfaction between the plaintiffs and one of the sureties of the defaulting county judge. A judgment for the plaintiffs upon a directed verdict was accordingly reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial. When the cause was reached in the district court, the plaintiffs withdrew their replies and demurred generally to the amended and supplemental answers, with the inevitable result that the demurrer was overruled and a judgment was rendered for the defendant. From that judgment this proceeding in error is prosecuted, which presents the identical controversy argued and decided in *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Brown*, 70 Neb. 696. We are entirely satisfied with the opinion of Mr. Commissioner ALBERT, filed at the last hearing, which has become the "law of the case," and to which we refer in preference to repeating it here. We will, however, note what appears to us to be an additional reason for the decision then made. As between the railway company and the county judge and his sureties, the latter were, under the circumstances of this case, the principal debtors. That is to say: If before, or in the absence of, the settlement the plaintiffs had recovered any sum from the company it would have been entitled to indemnification at the hands of the officer and his sureties, and it follows as a matter of course that a settlement with and discharge of the latter by the plaintiffs released also the party for whom they were sponsors; for it cannot be doubted that if a creditor to whom two persons are obligated, one as principal and the other as surety, releases the former he also discharges the

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Emley v. Citizens State Bank.

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latter, and we think there is no difference in principle if the person released is, as to the creditor, a surety only, if he is known to be ultimately liable to the party not formally discharged. The creditor cannot intentionally deprive his debtor of his indemnity, and still hold him to his obligation.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

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**JOHN EMLEY, ADMINISTRATOR, APPELLEE, V. CITIZENS  
STATE BANK OF STANTON, APPELLANT.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,871.

1. **Trial: REPLY.** A trial judge does not commit prejudicial error by refusing to strike from a reply allegations of new matter already embraced in the issues raised by the petition and answer, and therefore admissible in evidence without further pleading.
2. **Issues: VERDICT: INDEMNITY.** Where the issue is as to whether a certificate of deposit was issued against a deposit in a bank, and the general verdict is for the plaintiff, based upon his denial that such instrument ever existed, the court need not require indemnity against such alleged outstanding instrument.
3. **A cross-examination should be confined to the subject matter of the examination in chief.**

**APPEAL from the district court for Stanton county:  
GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

**G. A. Eberly, for appellant.**

**A. R. Oleson, John A. Ehrhardt, W. W. Young, W. P. Cowan and A. A. Kearney, contra.**

## AMES, C.

This case was formerly before this court and decided by an opinion prepared by Mr. Commissioner OLDHAM, *Sharp v. Citizens Bank of Stanton*, 70 Neb. 758. Reference is made to that opinion for a recital of such of the facts as are not stated below. After the cause had been remanded, Emley, the administrator of the estate of William T. Sharp, deceased, was permitted to intervene, such intervention being treated substantially as a substitution of the administrator for all the former plaintiffs, and the litigation thereafter proceeded as an action between him and the bank alone. In his petition he sought to recover as upon a demand arising upon open, check or deposit account and claimed interest from the alleged date of the deposit, or February 6, 1888, alleging that the fact of the deposit and indebtedness had been fraudulently concealed by the bank and its officers, and that the same did not come to his knowledge until within a year prior to the filing of his petition, and that if any certificate of deposit or other evidence of it had been ever executed or issued it had been lost or destroyed, but that in truth and in fact none such had ever been made or issued. Before answering, the defendant, for no very well-defined reason, moved the court for an order requiring the plaintiff to separately state and number causes of action in his petition, but there being but one cause alleged, the motion was overruled, and the defendants filed an offer to confess judgment for the principal of the sum sued for, viz., \$938.10, together with 7 per cent. interest thereon from June 1, 1904, and costs of suit. The offer was declined. The answer, besides a qualified general denial, pleads affirmatively that at the time the deposit of money was alleged to have been made the Citizens Bank of Stanton was a private institution, owned by Frank P. Hanlon and John Eberly, as partners, and that the books of said partnership showed that a certificate of deposit was issued therefor to the deceased, William T. Sharp, which was negotiable in form, and payable upon

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*Emley v. Citizens State Bank.*

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demand and its return, but that such demand and return had not been made. It was further alleged that the defendant bank was an incorporation which had become such in May, 1890, and that after its incorporation it was informed by the said Sharp that no such deposit had ever been made, and that the defendant had since relied upon said statement, believing it to be true. They demanded therefore that a recovery, if any, should be conditioned upon the execution by the plaintiff, with surety, of a good and sufficient bond of indemnity against said outstanding certificate of deposit, if there was one. The answer concluded with a plea of the statute of limitations. A reply was filed, denying new matter, and alleging that the incorporated bank was a successor both ostensibly and in fact to the name, business, assets and liabilities of the private institution. It is assigned for error that the court erred in refusing to strike out this allegation, but it is implied by the language of the answer also, and evidence in support of it would have been admissible in its absence, so that, if there was error, it was without prejudice. There was a trial, verdict and judgment for the plaintiff for the amount prayed for, and defendant appeals to this court.

There is no complaint as to instructions, and but little opportunity to err with respect to them. The litigation involved issues of fact only, which appear to have been fairly tried and submitted to the jury, and we know no reason why their verdict should be disturbed. The question whether a certificate of deposit had been issued against which the defendant is entitled to be indemnified is, if an issue at all, one of fact which was disposed of with the rest; there was no separate or special finding of it made or demanded, and no bond of indemnity was therefore requisite. We are also of opinion that the defendant is estopped with respect to it by their present and former pleadings.

The cashier of the defendant was examined as a witness by the plaintiff concerning his knowledge of entries upon the books of the bank for the purpose of proving the alleged

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*Cizek v. Cizek.*

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fact of concealment, and certain letters written by him to the widow of the deceased were admitted for the same purpose, and counsel complain because the defendant was not permitted to cross-examine concerning certain alleged conversations between the witness and the deceased with reference to these entries and to matters mentioned in the letters. But it was the existence of the entries and the witness' knowledge of their existence, and not the reason or occasion of their having been made, that was the subject of the examination in chief, and the matter sought to be drawn out was not a proper subject of cross-examination. In other words, the object and effect of the examination in chief was not to prove by the witness any transaction between him and the deceased, but to prove that he had known of the existence of certain alleged evidence of such a transaction, and he was not called upon to tell what that transaction was or whether the supposed evidence thereof was true or false. If the deceased had been alive, and plaintiff in the action, the attempted cross-examination would have been equally objectionable, and, hence, a construction of section 329 of the code, which is urged upon our attention, is not called for.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court is

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**AFFIRMED.**

**MICHAEL CIZEK v. ANNA CIZEK.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,172.

1. **Divorce: ALIMONY: JURISDICTION.** Jurisdiction relative to divorce and alimony is given by statute, and every power exercised by the court with reference thereto must look for its source in the statute, or it does not exist. *Cizek v. Cizek*, 69 Neb. 800, followed and approved.

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Cizek v. Cizek.

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2. **Alimony: Power of Court.** Under section 27, ch. 25, Comp. St. 1905, the district court has a continuing power, after a decree of divorce and alimony has been granted, to review and revise the provisions for alimony at its subsequent terms on petition of either of the parties.
3. ——: ——. If the decree of the trial court awarding alimony in a divorce proceeding is void for want of jurisdiction, the court may at a subsequent term award suitable alimony upon application and a sufficient showing.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county:  
**ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE.** *Affirmed.*

*Talbot & Allen and Hainer & Smith*, for plaintiff in error.

*J. E. Philpott, contra.*

**OLDHAM, C.**

This is an action by supplemental petition to review, revise and amend a former decree attempting to award Anna Cizek alimony in a divorce proceeding, originally instituted by Michael Cizek against her in the district court for Lancaster county, Nebraska. The facts underlying the controversy are that in March, 1902, Michael Cizek brought an action for divorce against his wife, Anna Cizek, and in his petition alleged that he was the owner in fee of certain lots situated in Lincoln, Nebraska, and further alleged that it was his wish that his wife, Anna Cizek, should be allowed a reasonable sum for alimony. Anna Cizek, the wife and present plaintiff, filed an answer and cross-petition in which she also asked for alimony. A decree of divorce was granted on the cross-petition of the wife, and, in lieu of all other orders of alimony, the court attempted to decree a conveyance of the lands owned by the husband to the wife, with a provision that when the lands were so conveyed the wife should execute a mortgage for \$250 on the lands in favor of the husband, payable six months after date and bearing interest at the rate of 6 per

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Cizek v. Cizek.

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cent. This decree was not appealed from by either of the parties, but the husband, Michael Cizek, refused to comply with the decree, and the wife attempted to enforce it by a suit for the possession of the land, and succeeded so far as the judgment of the district court was concerned. But on a review of the judgment by this court, in *Cizek v. Cizek*, 69 Neb. 800, it was held that the decree of the court, in so far as it attempts to award the real estate of the husband to the wife as alimony, was void and subject to collateral attack. After the rendition of this opinion, and more than a year after the first judgment, plaintiff, Anna Cizek, instituted this suit, in which she alleges all the proceedings heretofore had in the case, and prays the court to so alter, amend and correct its former decree as to grant her a reasonable allowance for support and alimony. Defendant, Michael Cizek, answered plaintiff's petition by admitting the former decree of divorce, and pleading the former judgment as a bar to any subsequent suit by the wife for alimony. On issues thus joined, there was a trial to the court and a judgment for the plaintiff for \$375 alimony in gross. To reverse this judgment defendant, Michael Cizek, brings error to this court.

The contention of the defendant is that, as the judgment of the district court, which attempted to award alimony in the original suit, was not appealed from by either of the parties, it is a final and binding judgment, which, although erroneous, could at most only be reviewed, after the term in which it was rendered, under the provisions of section 318 of the code, and that to entitle plaintiff to a new trial under this provision of the code the action should have been instituted within one year from the date of the judgment. If plaintiff's right of review depends on section 318 of the code, there can be no doubt that the defendant's position is well taken; but, as said by this court at the former hearing of this case: "Jurisdiction relative to divorce and alimony is given by statute, and every power exercised by the court with reference thereto must look for its source in the statute, or it does not exist." The

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sections of the statute providing for divorce and alimony are contained in chapter 25, Comp. St. 1905, and section 27 of this chapter is as follows: "After a decree for alimony or other allowance for the wife and children, or either of them, and also after a decree for the appointment of trustees to receive and hold any property for the use of the wife or children, as before provided, the court may, from time to time, on the petition of either of the parties, revise and alter such decree respecting the amount of such alimony or allowance, or the payment thereof, and also respecting the appropriation and payment of the principal and income of the property so held in trust, and may make any decree respecting any of the said matters which such court might have made in the original suit." This section of the statute has been interpreted by this court in *Ellis v. Ellis*, 13 Neb. 91, a case in which the wife had been awarded the lands of the husband as alimony in a divorce proceeding, and, after the adjournment of the term of court at which the decree of divorce had been granted, the wife by a supplemental petition asked to have the former decree amended and revised. In considering the question, COBB, J., speaking for the court, said:

"In decreeing the conveyance of the land, the court exceeded its powers under the statute: yet, had the defendant seen fit to make the conveyance according to the decree, it would have been a full discharge thereof. He not having done so, it was within the power of the court, upon proper notice, to revise and alter such decree in respect to the payment of such alimony or allowance, this supplemental or revised decree being one which 'such court might have made in the original suit.'"

In the recent case of *Chambers v. Chambers*, 75 Neb. 850, the construction of the statute in question was considered, and some of the authorities reviewed and the conclusion was reached that an application for permanent alimony or for a modification of a decree for alimony at a subsequent term must be based upon facts which did not exist when the decree was entered, or show a sufficient

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reason why the issues tendered by the application were not litigated and determined in the original suit.

In the case at bar a good and sufficient reason is shown why the former decree for alimony should be modified. The condition is similar to that involved in *Ellis v. Ellis, supra*, with the additional circumstance that in this case the defendant challenged the jurisdiction of the court to award the alimony allowed in the original decree, and was successful in that challenge. Having demonstrated that the attempted adjudication of the court upon the question of alimony was nugatory and of no effect, he cannot now be heard to urge it as a final adjudication of the matter. This brings the case precisely within the rule announced in *Chambers v. Chambers, supra*, in that a sufficient reason is shown why the issues tendered by the application in the original suit were not litigated and determined.

The judgment of the district court is therefore right, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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BYRON REED COMPANY, APPELLEE, v. ERNEST KLABUNDE  
ET AL., APPELLEES; MARY MANGOLD, APPELLANT.

FILED JUNE 8, 1907. NO. 14,976.

1. **Vendor and Purchaser: QUITCLAIM.** A purchaser of real estate, who takes by quitclaim deed, takes subject to all existing equities against the grantor.
2. **Wills: PROBATE.** The county court has original jurisdiction in the probate of a will, and its order admitting a will to probate is conclusive, unless by a direct proceeding, by appeal, or otherwise, it is reversed. *Loosemore v. Smith*, 12 Neb. 343, followed and approved.
3. **Trusts: Power to Mortgage.** Where a trust is created for the support and maintenance of the beneficiary, neither the trustee nor

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the beneficiary has the power to assign or mortgage the trust estate, without such power is expressly conferred in the instrument creating the trust.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:  
ABRAHAM L. SUTTON, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*J. J. O'Connor*, for appellant.

*Dexter L. Thomas, Hall & Stout, Paul L. Martin and Morning & Berge, contra.*

OLDHAM, C.

On November 3, 1888, Ernest Klabunde and his wife, Wilhelmina Klabunde, purchased an eighty-acre tract of land in Douglas county, Nebraska, from the Byron Reed Company, plaintiff in this action, and on March 16, 1891, they bought an adjoining sixty-acre tract from the same company. The title to the lands was taken in the name of Wilhelmina Klabunde, and the lands were occupied as a homestead by Ernest Klabunde and wife. As part of the purchase price of these tracts of land, three mortgages were executed to the Byron Reed Company for the respective sums of \$1,350, \$750 and \$550. While these mortgages were unpaid, Wilhelmina Klabunde departed this life on the 11th day of February, 1894. After her death a paper, purporting to be the last will of the deceased, duly attested and witnessed as such, was offered and admitted to probate in the county court of Douglas county on the 10th day of March, 1894. There was no contest over the probate of the will, which was entered of record. The material provisions of the will, as probated and entered on the records of Douglas county, are as follows:

"I give to my son, August Klabunde, my home farm, where I now reside (describing it), all my household goods, four horses, two colts, four milch cows, ten head of young cattle, fifteen hogs, and all my farm machinery belonging to the farm, and now in my possession, with the

following condition: That my son, August Klabundé, shall give to Ernest Klabunde, my husband, a good home with board and \$150 per year, during the natural term of Ernest Klabunde's life, and this shall be a mortgage on said above described premises, nor shall my son, August Klabunde, have a right to sell the within described real estate without the consent of my husband, Ernest Klabunde." August Klabunde, the beneficiary in this will, was the only child and sole heir at law of Wilhelmina and Ernest Klabunde. He married; and the father, Ernest Klabunde, made his home with him in harmony with the provisions of the will until June 26, 1896, when, as appears from the testimony in the record, August Klabunde and his wife drove the old man from the premises, and since then have utterly refused to comply with the provisions of the will.

On December 12, 1894, and after the death of Wilhelmina Klabunde and the probate of her will, August Klabunde and wife executed a mortgage on the real estate for \$2,500, for the purpose of renewing and taking up the three mortgages which had been executed by Wilhelmina Klabunde and her husband as before set out. Ernest Klabunde joined in this mortgage, and the three prior mortgages were accordingly satisfied. At the same time a commission mortgage of \$125 was executed to the Byron Reed Company for its commission on the renewal. On December 20, 1895, in payment of certain instalments of interest and certain taxes, a new mortgage for \$450 was given to the Byron Reed Company to cover these items.

On the 30th day of April, 1896, a suit was instituted by the Byron Reed Company to foreclose this latter mortgage for \$450, subject to the \$2,500 mortgage, which had been indorsed for value to one George W. Cook, and the \$125 commission mortgage. The Mangold & Glandt Bank of Bennington, Nebraska, was made a party defendant in this action, because it was the holder of a junior mortgage on the premises, executed by August Klabunde and wife alone. When this foreclosure proceeding was instituted,

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defendant Ernest Klabunde called at the office of the Byron Reed Company concerning the suit, and they advised him to go to their attorney and have an answer prepared. This he did, and an answer was accordingly prepared for him and filed, admitting the execution of the mortgage sued upon and its priority as a lien over his equity as provided in the will of his deceased wife. Judgment was accordingly rendered and sale of the premises had, the Byron Reed Company being the purchaser at the sale, which was subsequently confirmed on the 22d day of March, 1898, and no appeal was taken from the decree of confirmation.

On December 7, 1898, the Byron Reed Company, by a quitclaim deed, conveyed its interest in the property to George M. Mangold, son of the cashier of the Mangold & Glandt Bank, which had paid the amount of the claim of the Byron Reed Company, and later paid the \$2,500 mortgage owned by George W. Cook. On October 30, 1901, George M. Mangold, at the request of Peter Mangold, executed a warranty deed purporting to convey the said real estate to one Ed Wiese, then a tenant on the land, who in turn executed a mortgage to the Mangold & Glandt Bank, and, as a part of the same transaction, conveyed the premises to Mary Mangold, wife of Peter Mangold. These two last mentioned deeds and the last mentioned mortgage were held in escrow in the Mangold & Glandt Bank, and neither delivered nor filed for record until the fall of 1903, and after Ernest Klabunde had begun an action to set aside the decree of foreclosure and the confirmation of the sale on the ground of mistake and fraud, and filed a notice of *lis pendens*.

On the 23d day of March, 1901, Ernest Klabunde commenced a suit in equity in the district court for Douglas county against the Byron Reed Company, seeking to set aside and vacate its decree of foreclosure and all proceedings had thereunder, including the sheriff's deed to the Byron Reed Company, on the ground of fraud and mistake. His petition was dismissed in the district court, but

on an appeal to this court, and on a rehearing of the cause, in an opinion delivered by HOLCOMB, C. J., 69 Neb. 126, the decree of the district court dismissing the plaintiff's bill was reversed, and a decree was entered here vacating and setting aside the decree of foreclosure and the sale had thereunder, and the cause was remanded for a new trial. When, in conformity with this mandate, a new trial was granted, amended pleadings were filed and all subsequent parties to the record were brought in. The Byron Reed Company filed an amended petition for the foreclosure of the \$450 mortgage and alleged that it had conveyed all its interest in the premises by quitclaim to George M. Mangold, who in turn had conveyed to Weise, and Weise to Mary Mangold, who was alleged then to be the owner of the premises in controversy. Ernest Klabunde filed an answer and cross-petition in which he alleged the priority of his lien under the will of Wilhelmina Klabunde, and denied the execution and validity of the several mortgages executed after the probate of the will of his deceased wife. August Klabunde answered, denying the validity of the mortgages and alleging his interest in the land under the will of his mother. The Mangold & Glandt Bank answered, disclaiming interest, and alleging that their subsequent mortgage had been paid and satisfied by August Klabunde. George M. Mangold answered, alleging that he had conveyed all his interest in the premises to Wiese, and that Wiese in turn had conveyed to Mary Mangold. Wiese answered, alleging his conveyance to Mary Mangold and disclaiming further interest in the land. Mary Mangold answered, alleging ownership of the premises and her purchase for value without notice of the rights of Ernest Klabunde, and also setting up the fact that the land in controversy was never owned by Wilhelmina Klabunde, and that it was held by her in trust for Ernest Klabunde. She also alleged that the purported will of Wilhelmina Klabunde was a forgery written after the death of Wilhelmina Klabunde, and that its probate was procured by fraud and perjury. These allegations were denied by the reply of Ernest Kla-

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bunde. On issues thus joined there was a trial to the court, and a judgment and decree, in which it was held that the Byron Reed Company and their successors in interest purchased with actual and constructive notice of the rights and equities of Ernest Klabunde; that the will, having been duly admitted to probate, was not subject to collateral attack by the Byron Reed Company or their successors; that the will created an inalienable trust estate upon the real estate in favor of Ernest Klabunde, and under its provisions Ernest and August Klabunde had no right or authority to execute any of the mortgages made by them after the probate of the will, but that the \$2,500 renewal mortgage and the \$125 commission mortgage and the \$450 mortgage for interest and taxes, set up in the plaintiff's petition, represented renewals of valid mortgages which were on the said real estate at the time of the death of Wilhelmina Klabunde, and created in the holders thereof an equitable lien against said real estate, by way of subrogation, superior to the interests of both August and Ernest Klabunde. The court then rendered an accounting between Mary Mangold, as a mortgagee in possession, and Ernest and August Klabunde, and allowed her the face of the mortgages with 7 per cent. interest and taxes paid, amounting to \$6,523.36, and charged her with the rents and profits of the land, while occupied by her, at the rate of \$420 a year, making a total of rents and profits and interest to be deducted in the sum of \$3,470.20, leaving a balance due of \$3,053.16, which was declared to be a first lien on the premises. As between August and Ernest Klabunde, the court found that the terms of the trust had been violated and repudiated by August Klabunde, and found the amount due from him to his father under the terms of the will, and taxed the gross amount as a second lien on the premises, and the land was ordered to be sold to satisfy the first and second liens so found. To reverse this judgment and decree defendant Mary Mangold appeals to this court.

As the Byron Reed Company disclaimed any interest in

its amended petition, and the court properly found that it had conveyed all its interest to the grantors of Mary Mangold, it plainly has no cause for complaint in this tribunal. So we will only examine the decree so far as it affects the rights of Mary Mangold. In the brief filed in her behalf, it is urged that the judgment and findings of the court are erroneous in three particulars: First, in holding that Mary Mangold bought with notice of the rights of Ernest Klabunde; second, in determining the rights of Ernest Klabunde under the will, which was charged to have been a forgery; third, in treating the land as having been the property of Wilhelmina Klabunde, when it was in fact always the property of Ernest Klabunde. We will consider these alleged errors in the order assigned in the brief. It is conceded in the brief that, when Mary Mangold took the deed to the premises and paid the consideration therefor, she had constructive notice by a *lis pendens* of the suit of Ernest Klabunde to set aside the foreclosure decree. But it is contended that the Byron Reed Company had no notice of the claim of Ernest Klabunde at the time it purchased at the foreclosure sale, and the rule is invoked, which was recognized by this court in *Snowden v. Tyler*, 21 Neb. 199, that "a purchaser *pendente lite* from a purchaser who bought without notice, and for a valuable consideration, may protect himself under the first purchaser." The rule announced is sound in principle, but how can we now say that the Byron Reed Company purchased at the foreclosure sale without knowledge of the rights of Ernest Klabunde, in view of our holding in this case at its former hearing, when we set aside that sale for the very reason that a constructive fraud had been practiced upon Ernest Klabunde by the Byron Reed Company in procuring the decree of foreclosure? Again, the Byron Reed Company conveyed to its grantee by quitclaim and not by warranty deed, and in conveyances of real estate a quitclaim deed is of itself a red light to warn the grantee that the rear end of the transaction is exposed to equities. *Arlington Mill & Ele-*

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*vator Co. v. Yates*, 57 Neb. 286; *Bowman v. Griffith*, 35 Neb. 361; *Pleasants v. Blodgett*, 39 Neb. 741.

Passing then to the second question, which is as to the right of Mary Mangold to assail collaterally the validity of the will of Wilhelmina Klabunde, it is plain that Mrs. Mangold could not have assailed or contested the probate of the will in the county court, because she was not a party in interest in the controversy. And, again, if she had been a party in interest, she could not, after the will had been admitted to probate, assail the decree in a collateral matter. In *Loosemore v. Smith*, 12 Neb. 343, it was held:

"The county court has original jurisdiction in the probate of a will, and its order admitting a will to probate is conclusive, unless by a direct proceeding, by appeal, or otherwise, it is reversed."

This case was cited with approval in the recent case of *Williams v. Miles*, 63 Neb. 859, and is conclusive of the question that a will duly admitted to probate is not subject to collateral attack.

With reference to the third objection that the property was always, in fact, the property of Ernest Klabunde, we think that it does not lie in the mouth of defendant, who holds her equities as the successor of the Byron Reed Company, to assert such a defense. The land was purchased from the Byron Reed Company and deeded by it to Wilhelmina Klabunde. The original mortgages were taken from her and her husband in recognition of her ownership of the fee. The land, when purchased, was occupied as a homestead and was not a subject of fraudulent conveyance between husband and wife. It is not necessary to decide whether or not, under the terms of the trust created in the will of Mrs. Klabunde, the property could have been conveyed by deed by the son, even if the father had joined in the conveyance. But it is clear to us that the trial court properly held that, under the provisions of the will, there was no authority conferred on the trustee to incumber the trust estate by mortgage, even by consent of the father, who was the *cestui que trust*. In 1 Perry, Trusts, sec. 386a,

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Nichols & Shepard Co. v. Miller.

it is said: "If a trust is created for a specific purpose, and is so limited that it is not repugnant to the rule against perpetuities and is in other respects legal, neither the trustees, nor the *cestui que trust*, nor his creditors or assignees, can divest the property from the appointed purposes." And it is generally held that, where a trust is created for the support and maintenance of the beneficiary, neither the trustee, nor the beneficiary, has the power to assign or mortgage the trust estate without such power being expressly conferred in the instrument creating the trust. *Bloomer v. Waldron*, 3 Hill (N. Y.), 361; *In re Hoyt*, 5 Dem. Sur. (N. Y.) 432; *Meek v. Briggs*, 87 Ia. 610, 43 Am. St. Rep. 410; *Willis v. Smith*, 66 Tex. 31, 17 S. W. 247; *Stokes v. Payne*, 58 Miss. 614, 38 Am. Rep. 340.

We are therefore of the opinion that all the rights and equities of the appellant were fully protected and enforced in the judgment and decree of the district court, and we recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

AMES and EPPERSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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NICHOLS & SHEPARD COMPANY V. AUGUST H. MILLER ET AL.

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,104.

Instructions examined, and held erroneous.

ERROR to the district court for Stanton county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. Reversed.

M. D. Tyler, for plaintiff in error.

A. R. Oleson and W. W. Young, contra.

## EPPERSON, C.

In this proceeding the plaintiff in error seeks to reverse the judgment of the district court for Stanton county in an action instituted by the plaintiff in error against the defendants in error on two promissory notes. It is admitted by the pleadings that the notes sued on, with others, were given by defendant August H. Miller, as principal, and Wilhelm Miller, as surety, in consideration of the purchase of a threshing outfit consisting of a traction engine, separator and appliances. In their answer, defendants alleged that they suffered a total failure of consideration, and that the property was not as represented by the plaintiff's sales agent. In reply the plaintiff exhibited a written instrument signed by the defendants, which it alleged was a contract of purchase. This instrument contained a warranty of the property, and imposed conditions to be performed by the purchasers precedent to a rescission thereof in case the machinery was not as represented. And it also provided: "This order is subject to the acceptance of the said company, and, when so accepted, is a binding contract"; but did not state in what manner the company's acceptance should be evidenced.

Defendants sought to impeach this instrument on the grounds that it had not been accepted by the plaintiff, and that the signature of the defendant thereto had been obtained by fraud. Some evidence was given in support of the latter contention. This instrument was signed by the defendants and delivered to plaintiff or its agent. Thereupon the property was delivered to defendants. It was *prima facie* evidence of the contract, and the burden rested upon the defendants to impeach it by proving fraud, or to defeat it by showing a compliance with its conditions on their part, or a waiver thereof by plaintiff. This was the most important issue in the case, regarding which the jury should have been, but were not, instructed. This contract provided that in case the machinery proved defective, the defendants should notify the plaintiff by writing. No

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evidence whatever was introduced to show an attempt on the part of the defendants to comply with this provision of the contract. The court in two instructions, excepted to by the plaintiff, assumed that such evidence had been submitted, prefacing the same with the following: "If you further find that defendants failed and neglected to notify the plaintiff company of such defects, and afford the plaintiff an opportunity to remedy the same as required by said written warranty, then," etc. Such instructions were not sustaintd by the evidence, and the giving of the same was error.

Defendants' counsel contend that there was a total failure of consideration, and that it is immaterial whether or not the written order was binding upon the defendants. We cannot apply that rule to this case as it is now presented. The contract itself contemplated a total failure by providing: "If any part of the machinery cannot be made to fill the warranty, that part which fails shall immediately be returned to the place where it was received, with the option of the company to either furnish another machine, or to return the money and notes." This, also, is a condition with which the defendants should have either complied, or shown a waiver thereof by the company or an agent having actual or ostensible authority. And the evidence on this point should also be submitted to the jury under proper instructions.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and this cause remanded for a new trial.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

BRITISH-AMERICAN INSURANCE COMPANY OF NEW YORK  
v. COLUMBIAN OPTICAL COMPANY.

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,238.

Evidence examined, and *held* insufficient to sustain the verdict.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: HOWARD KENNEDY, JR., JUDGE. Reversed.

*Greene, Breckenridge & Kinsler*, for plaintiff in error.

*Hall & Stout*, contra.

EPPERSON, C.

On the 20th day of June, 1903, the plaintiff held a policy of fire insurance issued by the defendant company upon plaintiff's stock of optical goods situate at No. 211 South Sixteenth street, Omaha, Nebraska. The plaintiff also held \$8,000 concurrent insurance issued by other companies. On that day there was a fire in plaintiff's place of business, which it alleges resulted in its damage to the extent of \$6,594.03. To recover one-fifth of this amount, with interest, the plaintiff brought this action. A trial was had to a jury, which resulted in a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff in the amount sued for. The defendant prosecutes error to this court.

Many assignments of error were argued, but we find it necessary to consider only the sufficiency of the evidence as to the damages sustained. The proof shows that the property damaged consisted almost entirely of 175,000 lenses, evidence as to the value of which was very unsatisfactory and indefinite; and it is maintained by the defendant that the same is insufficient to sustain the verdict of the jury. Mr. Agnew, the president of the plaintiff company, was the principal witness in behalf of the plaintiff. He testified that the value of the damaged property was \$6,594.03. He reached this conclusion by taking the inventory of his stock

of goods made in January, 1903, adding thereto the amount of the goods bought prior to June 20, 1903, and deducting the goods sold. There is a manifest difference between the value of the damaged goods and the amount of damage to the goods, and as to the latter no definite amount is fixed by the witness, nor was there testimony given from which the jury could intelligently arrive at the amount. The proof shows that the damaged lenses at the time of the fire were packed in small boxes, each containing about twelve dozen, and that they have been kept separate since the fire from the other merchandise of the plaintiff company. Mr. Agnew testified: "I mean that I did not take each lens, but I looked at a great many boxes, and my judgment, in the optical business for years, told me that the stuff that was there was not worth while doing anything with." He further said that many of the lenses would have to be thrown away, but did not know what proportion; that the rest of them, if they are not scratched, or broken or damaged in any way, can be cleaned; that his investigation of the damage was only of a part of the boxes; that since January 1, 1904, he has cleaned a part of them; that at the time of the trial he was unable to tell how many of them could be cleaned, and that such as could be cleaned would have a value for second quality lenses. He said: "Q. They would have a value for second quality lenses, then, wouldn't they? A. Yes, sir. Q. How much? A. Well, that is a question. I do not know how much. I will have to find out. Q. In proportion? A. I will have to find out. I can tell you, as I say, this summer, when I find out how many I have got. Q. When we take this case up after our summer vacation you can let us know? A. Yes. \* \* \* Q. All that is necessary to do to these lenses is to clean them up? A. No, sir; many of them we have to throw away. Q. How many, what proportion? A. I don't know; I can tell you this summer some time. Q. These lenses there can all be cleaned, can they not? A. No, a good many of them are broken and lost. Q. All that are not broken; all that are

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not water stained? A. No, there is a lot with scratches in. Q. All that are not scratched? A. Yes. Q. The rest can be cleaned? A. Yes; if they are not scratched or broken or damaged in any way, of course, we can clean them. Q. How many are there of that kind? A. I will tell you this summer. \* \* \* Q. Then you could have found out, could you not, Mr. Agnew, exactly what amount of merchandise you had left after the fire? A. If you had not denied liability. That is what I am doing now, and I expect it will take one man over a year at the rate of one lens apiece for ten hours a day—one lens per minute, ten hours a day; and then he can't do that average. What I mean is this: On the lenses that I had in the place it will take one man 290 some days—I figured it up—at the rate of one lens a minute for ten hours a day, to handle them. Now then, some of those lenses it takes us four or five and ten minutes to clean." Mr. Riggs, an expert optician, testified also that, in his opinion, it would cost more to clean and focus the lenses than they were worth. He testified: "I selected lenses from what appeared to me to be the best, and also what appeared to be the ones in the worst condition, and also at different parts at random; not any special part of the lenses, but just as I would naturally go through them to estimate the amount of the loss." As to the condition in which he found the property after the fire, he says: "The envelopes in which the lenses were contained were, in a great majority of cases, destroyed. The ends of the boxes were destroyed, and the lenses themselves were covered with the result of a combination of smoke and water, I presume. It was a dark stain—looked like smoke—which could not be removed by any ordinary means, and some of them, of course, worse than others; but the ones that were the least damaged were not fit for use, and those that were the most damaged were covered with a thick gummy substance, probably the result of action of creosote or from the smoke, I presume." On cross-examination, however, it developed that this witness had made several visits to inspect the damaged property.

He could not say that he had at any one time inspected as many as 100 lenses; but he gave no number definitely, but thinks he did handle as many as 100 on one occasion; would not go beyond that; couldn't say that he handled different lenses at different times; thinks that altogether he handled at least 700. It is not shown that he examined the lenses contained in the envelopes which had not been broken by or as a result of the fire, and no evidence was given which would justify the jury in finding that such were damaged, and a total loss of all the lenses was necessary to sustain the verdict. The general statement made by Mr. Agnew, as well as Mr. Riggs, that the work necessary to clean and separate the lenses would cost more than they were worth was not evidence, but simply the conclusion of the witnesses; and, in the face of the other testimony, we are convinced that, from the proof, the jury could not conclude that there was a total loss. That there was a fire is admitted. That there was damage is proved. But the amount of such damage was not shown. We do not mean to hold the plaintiff to the difficult task of inspecting carefully each of the 175,000 lenses; but an inspection of each box or envelope and a careful estimate of the damage is not unreasonable, and is a duty the plaintiff owes to itself, the defendant and the court. The trial was had in April, 1905, and since that time many months have elapsed. The interested parties have had their vacation, and the witness, Agnew, has had the opportunity to inspect his goods, and, presumably, may now give intelligent information as to the amount of the damage.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

## JOHN VAN BURG V. JOHN VAN ENGEN.

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,350.

1. **Pleading: Defense of Limitations: Burden of Proof.** In an action to recover an amount alleged to be due upon a verbal contract, the burden of proof is upon the defendant to prove that plaintiff's cause of action was barred by the statute of limitations, when that defense is in issue.
2. **Instructions: Review.** The trial court's instructions and rulings denying instructions requested examined, and held without error.
3. **Evidence: Review.** The rulings of the trial court on the admission and rejection of evidence offered examined, and found not erroneous.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Billingsley & Greene and R. H. Hagelin*, for plaintiff in error.

*Rose & Comstock, contra.*

EPPERSON, C.

The plaintiff was employed under a verbal contract to dig a well for the defendant; and, on September 30, 1904, brought this suit to recover \$65, the remainder alleged to be due upon the contract price. Plaintiff introduced evidence to the effect that said contract was entered into and completed in May, 1901. Defendant testified that the contract was entered into in the spring of 1900. The main contention in the case is that the action is barred by the statute of limitations. The jury returned a verdict for plaintiff for \$65 and interest, and defendant prosecutes error to this court.

1. Upon the trial the court instructed the jury that, in order to sustain his defense of the statute of limitations, the burden was upon the defendant to show that the well in question was dug more than four years prior to Septem-

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ber 30, 1904. Defendant contends that there was error in the giving of this instruction. There is a conflict of authority upon this proposition. See cases cited in 3 Elliott, Evidence, sec. 2461. Some of the courts hold that the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff to prove that the action accrued within the period of limitation. Other courts take the opposite view, imposing the burden upon the defendant. We were not favored with an oral argument of this case, and the briefs of counsel do not enter upon a discussion of the decisions bearing upon this point. It has, however, been established as a rule of practice in this state that, when the bar of the statute does not appear upon the face of the petition, the defense is waived, unless pleaded by the defendant. *Hanna v. Emerson, Talcott & Co.*, 45 Neb. 708; *Eayrs v. Nason*, 54 Neb. 143; *Hobson v. Cummins*, 57 Neb. 611; *McCormick Harvesting Machine Co. v. Cummins*, 59 Neb. 330. Under this rule of pleading, the statute of limitations is an affirmative defense. To require the defendant to plead that defense and to impose upon the plaintiff the burden of disproving it would be inconsistent. We are, therefore, of opinion that the burden is upon the one pleading such defense to prove it, and we adopt that line of authorities casting the burden of proof upon the defendant. See cases collected in 3 Elliot, Evidence, sec. 2461, note 7.

Again, the evidence in the case did not show when the action was begun, and the defendant argues that it was error for the court to recite that fact in the instruction complained of. The case was brought to the district court by appeal from a justice of the peace, and the trial judge had before him the original papers, and it was proper for him to take judicial notice of the time when the action was instituted and base his instruction as to the period of limitation upon the information contained in the justice's transcript. The record before us does not show that the recitation in the instruction complained of, as to when the action was commenced before the justice, was a misstatement of fact, and we cannot presume error.

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2. Prior to the trial the defendant filed his application for a continuance of the case for the reason that certain witnesses named were unable to attend the trial; that, if present, they would testify that the well in controversy was constructed in 1900. The plaintiff offered to admit that the witnesses, if present, would testify as stated in the affidavit, and the motion for a continuance was thereupon overruled. Upon the trial that portion of the affidavit relative to the proposed testimony of the absent witnesses was read in evidence, and the court instructed the jury in reference thereto as follows: "The jury are instructed that the credibility of the witnesses, and also the weight to be given to the admissions contained in the recital in the affidavit received in evidence are questions exclusively for the jury to determine." The defendant requested the court to instruct that such testimony is to be regarded and is entitled to like weight and credibility as if the said named witnesses were present in court and upon the witness stand testifying to said facts. The court refused so to instruct. This evidence, as shown by the affidavit, was immaterial, because it did not disclose at what time in 1900 the work was performed. If subsequent to September 30, 1900, then it clearly appears that their testimony would tend to show that the defendant was liable, and prejudice in refusing the instruction is not disclosed.

3. The other assignments of error pertain to the court's rulings upon the rejection and reception of evidence. We have carefully examined all of the assignments of error, and are clearly of the opinion that no prejudicial error was committed by the trial court. We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

GILALMOUS McCARTY, APPELLEE, v. LINCOLN TRACTION  
COMPANY, APPELLANT.

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,368.

**Trial: QUESTION FOR JUEY.** When a given state of facts is such that reasonable men may fairly differ upon the question as to whether or not there was negligence, the determination of the matter is for the jury.

APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:  
LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Clark & Allen*, for appellant.

*Rose & Comstock*, contra.

EPPERSON, C.

The only question presented for our consideration is the sufficiency of the evidence to support the verdict. The action was to recover damages for a personal injury sustained by the plaintiff alleged to have been inflicted through the negligence of the defendant's employees. The injury occurred while the plaintiff was in the act of alighting from one of the defendant's street cars upon which he was a passenger. The evidence shows that the plaintiff and another passenger, Hawkins, who was plaintiff's traveling companion, were at the time of the accident engaged in a business mission, and desired to alight from the car near the courthouse in Lincoln. Hawkins gave the signal to stop, and at the usual stopping place immediately east of the courthouse the car either stopped or nearly so. Plaintiff and Hawkins arose from their seats, and, while standing, asked for and received transfers from the conductor. Hawkins received his transfer and alighted from the car. Plaintiff then received his transfer, walked to the east side of the car, stepped upon the foot board or platform, then fell upon the pavement, receiving the in-

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jury complained of. The plaintiff testified that the car had stopped; and, while he was about to alight, it started with a sudden jerk, throwing him violently upon the pavement. His testimony as to the car stopping was corroborated by one of the defendant's witnesses. Other witnesses testified that the car had not stopped, but that it was greatly reduced in speed, and was moving very slowly when the plaintiff alighted therefrom; that the plaintiff stepped from the car, facing the rear, or, in other words, stepped off backwards. There was also testimony that the car had moved from 20 to 30 feet from the place where Hawkins alighted to the place where plaintiff alighted.

The place of accident was about one-third of a mile from the O street junction, where the plaintiff and Hawkins would each be required to board the car to which he had received a transfer. Defendant contends that the fact that the plaintiff had asked for and received a transfer ticket amounted to a notice to defendant that the plaintiff did not intend to alight from the car until he reached the junction point. The testimony of the defendant's conductor is to the effect that, after issuing the transfer, he saw all of plaintiff's movements up to and including the injury; that he had no knowledge that the plaintiff and Hawkins were traveling companions, nor that the plaintiff had occasion to stop at the courthouse. The facts that the defendant's conductor saw the plaintiff walk to the exit side of the car immediately after receiving the transfer, and the plaintiff's conduct in arising and following Hawkins, it seems would challenge the conductor's attention to the plaintiff's probable intention to alight. On the other hand, there is some merit in the defendant's argument that the facts regarding the issuance of the transfer ticket would justify the conductor in believing that the plaintiff did not intend to leave the car until the junction point was reached. Such, however, defendant cannot contend was always the rule, for the conductor had just a moment previous issued a similar transfer to Hawkins, who immediately left the car. After a careful considera-

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tion of this question, we consider that we cannot say that, as a matter of law, the fact regarding the issuance of the transfer ticket was sufficient to relieve the defendant from liability for which otherwise it was liable. It has been announced by this court that "when a given state of facts is such that reasonable men may fairly differ upon the question as to whether there was negligence or not, the determination of the matter is for the jury." *Omaha Street R. Co. v. Craig*, 39 Neb. 601. Under this rule, and after a careful consideration of the evidence, we are convinced that there was sufficient evidence introduced by plaintiff to authorize the submission of the case to the jury.

Defendant, however, contends that the evidence clearly shows contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff. As to this point, it clearly appears that, if the plaintiff's testimony is true (and this was a question for the jury to determine), he was not guilty of contributory negligence as alleged by defendant.

For these reasons and in view of the conflicting testimony as to the manner in which the injury occurred, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

**AMES and OLDHAM, CO., concur.**

**By the Court:** For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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Farmers & Merchants Bank v. Carlson.

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**FARMERS & MERCHANTS BANK, APPELLEE, V. WILLIAM  
CARLSON, APPELLANT.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,359.

Evidence examined, and held to support the judgment of the district court.

APPEAL from the district court for Polk county:  
**ARTHUR J. EVANS, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*John Tongue, for appellant.*

*E. E. Stanton, contra.*

**DUFFIE, C.**

William Carlson, appellant, made his note to the People's Medical Dispensary of Chicago, Illinois, for \$50, due six months from date. The note was executed in consideration of a contract made by the payee for six months' medical treatment, such treatment to be continued without further compensation if a cure was not effected within that time. The evidence is undisputed that the Farmers & Merchants Bank purchased this note in the usual course of business, paying full value therefor before its maturity. The defense relied upon is that, before signing the note, Carlson insisted that there should be indorsed on the back thereof the following: "Payable according to contract." It is claimed that these words have been erased from the back of the note and this worked a material alteration thereof. The case was tried to the court without a jury, and judgment entered in favor of the bank.

The agent of the medical company who took the note from Carlson testifies that no indorsement whatever was made upon the back of the note, and that it is now in the same condition as when signed by Carlson. Altschuler, who acted as the agent of the medical company in selling this and other notes to the bank, testifies that it is in the

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same condition as when received by him. The original note is found in the bill of exceptions, and a careful examination fails to disclose any evidence that the note was indorsed as claimed, or any signs that any erasure has been made or attempted. The finding of the district court is fully sustained by the evidence. Objections were made to the depositions of Collins and Altschuler, two of the plaintiff's witnesses, but of so technical a character that they do not call for any discussion.

We recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

**ALBERT** and **JACKSON**, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

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**OLAF ISAAC ET AL., APPELLANTS, v. W. J. HALDERMAN ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,365.

1. **Wills: Signature.** A testator, being unable to write his own name, said to the draftsman of his will, in the presence of two witnesses: "You know I cannot write. You will have to sign it for me." *Held*, That this was a sufficient request to authorize the draftsman to sign the testator's name.
2. **Nonexpert witnesses** called upon the question of the mental capacity of a testator must state the facts upon which their opinion of incapacity is based.
3. **Evidence examined**, and *held* insufficient to show either mental incapacity or undue influence.

APPEAL from the district court for Pawnee county:  
**ALBERT H. BABCOCK**, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

**W. H. Richards** and **L. W. Colby**, for appellants.

**G. T. Belding**, **J. C. Dort** and **F. Martin**, contra.

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## DUFFIE, C.

In 1867 Nels Isaac and his two brothers came to Nebraska, and each took up a homestead in Pawnee county in the same neighborhood. Nels Isaac and his brother Fred were bachelors. Some years later Fred Isaac died from injuries received in an accident, and Nels purchased from the administrator of his estate the 160 acres of land of which he died seized. Nels resided on his own homestead until a short time previous to his death, living alone and usually renting his two farms. About ten years previous to his death, which occurred August 9, 1902, Frederick Southard rented from him the place formerly belonging to his deceased brother, and continued as his renter up to the time of his death. The evidence is quite conclusive that Nels was a strong, hearty man up to a date not longer than one year previous to his decease; that something like two weeks previous to his death he left his own house and went to live with his renter, Frederick Southard, at whose place he died from inflammation of the bladder. On July 30, 1902, he executed his last will and testament, by the terms of which he devised to his renter, Frederick Southard, and Alvaretta Southard, his wife, the 160 acres of land upon which they were living as his tenants. To his brother, Swen A. Isaac, he bequeathed \$10. The balance of his estate he bequeathed to his other brothers and sisters who were then living, and to the legal heirs of his brothers and sisters who were dead. He named W. J. Halderman as executor of this will. The will was admitted to probate, but before the estate was finally settled the contestants moved to have the probate thereof set aside, and to be allowed to offer objections, which was done. Upon a trial in the county court the will was again admitted to probate, and from this order of the county court an appeal was taken by the contestants to the district court.

The objections made to the probate of the will are (1) That the instrument is not executed as required by law; (2) that it is not properly attested; (3) that at the date

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of its execution Nels Isaac was not possessed of sufficient mental capacity to make a will; (4) that the will was executed in its present form by reason of the undue influence exerted upon the testator by Frederick and Alvaretta Southard. The jury returned a verdict finding that the testator was of sound mind and memory, and not under any restraint or undue influence when the same was executed. The following special interrogatories and answers were also returned by the jury: "(1) Was the instrument 'Exhibit A' signed by Nels Isaac, or was it signed by some other person in his presence and by his express direction? A. Yes. (2) At the time of the alleged execution of 'Exhibit A' was Nels Isaac of sound mind and memory? A. Yes. (3) Was the execution of the instrument 'Exhibit A' obtained by the undue influence of Frederick and Alvaretta Southard? A. No." From the order entered on this verdict admitting the will to probate, and directing a distribution of the estate in accordance with its terms, the contestants have appealed.

The evidence discloses that Nels Isaac, the testator, could not read, and it is earnestly insisted that the evidence fails to show that his name was signed to the will by his express direction as required by our statute. The testimony relating to the execution of the will may be briefly summarized as follows: On the day previous to the making of the will the decedent asked Dr. Plehn, who attended him in his last illness, to call on W. J. Halderman, a banker of the town of Burchard, and with whom the decedent had transacted his banking business for many years, and request him to come to the house and write his will and to bring witnesses. On the next evening Mr. Halderman, together with his son, Fulton Halderman and Dr. Plehn, drove out to the decedent's farm occupied by Southard, and found the decedent sitting or lying in a hammock in the yard. The elder Halderman and decedent went into the house and into the room occupied by Isaac, where the will was written. Halderman testified that Isaac would dictate to him a section of the will, which

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would then be read over to him, after which another section of the will would be dictated, written and read to Isaac, and that after it was completed the whole instrument was read to Isaac who manifested his assent thereto. The decedent himself then opened the door into the kitchen where the doctor and young Halderman were sitting, and asked them to come in and witness his will. The younger Halderman started to read the instrument, when his father said it was unnecessary as Mr. Isaac was fully acquainted with its provisions, and turned to Isaac and told him that it was ready for his signature. Isaac then said to him: "You know I cannot write. You will have to sign it for me," and thereupon the elder Halderman signed Isaac's name to the instrument and afterwards made his mark, Isaac placing his hand upon the top of the pen. Dr. Plehn and young Halderman then signed as witnesses. This is the testimony of the two Haldermans and Dr. Plehn, and is uncontradicted. In *Murry v. Hennessey*, 48 Neb. 608, it was held that, where a will was signed by a third party and no proof offered of any request so to do from the testatrix, valid execution of the will was not established. But in *Elliott v. Elliott*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 832, the testator said to Mr. Peterson that the latter would have to write his name, and that he did so, and the testator after that touched the pen while his mark was made. This was held a sufficient request upon the part of the testator that his name be signed by Peterson. The case is a direct authority in support of the finding in this case that the will was properly executed.

We have read with care the voluminous record containing the evidence in this case, and can find no testimony which would go to support a verdict, if such had been returned, that the testator was of unsound mind or not perfectly capable of transacting business at the time the will was made. He had lived in Pawnee county since 1867. He had accumulated property estimated to be worth about \$20,000 at the time of his death. His mental capacity and good business judgment had not been questioned up to

the time this contest was filed. The doctor who attended him in his last illness, and another physician called in for consultation a few days previous to his death, both affirm his mental capacity. The banker with whom he transacted his business for years had no doubt of his ability to thoroughly understand and appreciate what he was doing. Numerous neighbors and acquaintances with no interest in the case testified to his capacity. On the other hand two or three physicians having no personal acquaintance with him, and in answer to hypothetical questions based upon his mode of living, of a secret habit which he is said to have practiced, and the fact that he usually kept a supply of beer on hand and of which he drank about one bottle a day, gave their opinion that he was not of sufficient mental capacity to make a will or to transact business. He never used intoxicants to excess. Being a bachelor, and living by himself, his house was not in the best of order nor tidily kept, and while some parties, apparently disinterested, testified to his want of mental capacity, the facts upon which they based their opinion are either not shown in the record or are clearly insufficient to sustain a finding of mental incapacity. We doubt whether we should pay any attention to the evidence of most of contestants' witnesses. In numerous cases we have held that a nonexpert witness can be permitted to express his opinion as to the sanity or insanity of a person only when he has shown other sufficient qualifications and has stated the facts and circumstances upon which his opinion of such mental condition is based. *Hoover v. State*, 48 Neb. 184; *Snider v. State*, 56 Neb. 309; *Lamb v. Lynch*, 56 Neb. 135, and cases found in 1 Page, Digest, 835. As said by the supreme court of Michigan in *Hibbard v. Baker*, 141 Mich. 124:

"It may be a question of some difficulty to determine in all cases whether a witness has shown himself competent, nor do we intimate that he may not be able to state to the jury his opinion, after showing that there were acts and appearances of the party which he is unable to describe to the jury, but which left an impression upon

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his mind; but in the absence of this, and where the testimony of the witness only goes the length of showing acts which are entirely consistent with sanity, and which have not the slightest tendency to show insanity, it would be a dangerous rule which would permit his opinion to be received." The reason for this is well stated by the same court in *Beaubien v. Cicotte*, 12 Mich. 459:

"The general doctrine is, that all witnesses speaking from observation must, as far as possible, state such facts as they can give as the basis of their opinion. This rule does not require them to describe what is not susceptible of description, nor to narrate facts enough to enable a jury to form an opinion from those alone. This would be impossible; and if it could be done, there would be no occasion for any opinion from the witness. \* \* \* But, if witnesses were not compellable to state such facts as are tangible, there would be no means of testing their truthfulness. When they state visible and intelligible appearances and acts, others who had the same means of observation may contradict them, or show significant and explanatory facts in addition; and if their story is fabricated, or if they describe facts having a medical explanation, medical experts may detect falsehood in inconsistent symptoms, or determine how far the symptoms truly given have a scientific bearing."

We fail to discover any evidence of undue influence exerted upon the testator by Frederick Southard or his wife. It is true they resided on the testator's farm for ten years or more, and had the opportunity to approach and influence him, but opportunity alone is not sufficient. It is quite evident that the deceased was well pleased with Southard's management of his farm and that he took a great liking to Southard's children, a young boy and girl. The children apparently reciprocated this kindly feeling and were in the decedent's company a great deal. He often took them to town and expressed great love for them, and on several occasions had said that he would will them the farm upon which their father and mother resided. It

appears, however, that about the middle of July previous to his death he changed his mind and concluded to give the land upon which plaintiff lived to Southard and his wife rather than to the children. J. S. Harrod testified that on July 18, 1902, Isaac brought a load of oats to town; that he shoveled out a part of the load, when Harrod took the shovel and unloaded the balance. After some conversation about other parties Isaac said to the witness: "Do you remember what I told you down town about the children?" I said, 'Fred Southard's?' And he said, 'Yes.' Well, he said, 'I have changed my mind about that. Sometimes, when a boy get 19 or 20 years old, they get kinda smart with older heads to nag them on, and Frank might tell his father and mother, when he was 19 or 20 years old, to get off there, that he owned the property.' He said, 'I would hate to have that happen, when I kicked the bucket. When I am gone, I wouldn't want that to happen. Fred Southard and his wife has been the best friends I ever had. They have treated me better than my own relations,' and he said, 'I am going to give the property to Fred and his wife, and let the children have it after they get through with it.'" Southard nor his wife were present when the will was made. It does not appear that they had knowledge of his intention to make a will at the time. So far as the record discloses, there is absolutely no evidence of any influence brought by them to bear upon the testator relating to the disposition of his property. It is further evident that the testator was not on the best of terms with some of his own relatives. His brother Swen, who lived in the same neighborhood, rarely called on him, and for years they did not visit back or forth to exceed half a dozen times. The evidence indicates that some trouble arose out of the settlement of the estate of the deceased brother, and this may, and probably does, account for the small amount bequeathed to him. The fact that the decedent bequeathed a large part of his property to strangers in blood is not an evidence either of mental incapacity or undue influence. Courts and juries are not warranted in setting aside last wills and

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*Isaac v. Halderman.*

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testaments, and substituting in lieu thereof their own notions as to what a testator should do with his property, except upon satisfactory evidence. No right of the citizen is more valued than the power to dispose of his property by will. No right is more solemnly assured to him by the law. Nor does it depend in any sense upon the judicious exercise of that right. It rarely happens that a man bequeaths his estate to the entire satisfaction of either his family or friends. The law wisely secures equality of distribution where a man dies intestate, but the very object of a will is to produce inequality and to provide for the wants of the testator's family, to protect those who are helpless, to reward those who have been affectionate, and to punish those who have been disobedient. In this country a man's prejudices form a part of his liberty. He has a right to them. He may be unjust to his children or relatives. He is entitled to the control of his property while living, and by will to direct its use after his death, subject only to such restrictions as are imposed by law. Where a man has sufficient memory and understanding to make a will, and such instrument is not the result of undue influence, it is not to be set aside without sufficient evidence, nor upon sentimental notions of equality. The verdict being the only one which the evidence warrants, errors in the instructions, if any, are immaterial and need no consideration.

We recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

**ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.**

**By the Court:** For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

**IDA M. HEIM, APPELLEE, V. FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF HUMBOLDT, APPELLANT.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,367.

**Banks: Deposits: Action.** A party went to the banking house of the defendant bank to make a time deposit, and asked the president of the bank what interest they were paying on money. His own testimony is to the effect that he asked the party what amount she had and how long it would be left. The reply was: About \$1,600, to be left for six months. He replied: "The bank is paying three per cent., but since you have come up here so far I will pay you four." The party then handed him an eastern draft for an amount exceeding \$1,600, and he wrote out and returned a time check for the amount, payable at the bank in six months, with interest at four per cent. This time check was signed by the president in his individual capacity, and it contained nothing to indicate that the money was deposited with the bank or that the bank assumed any obligation for its repayment. *Held*, That the depositor might recover from the bank in an action for money had and received.

**APPEAL from the district court for Richardson county:**  
**WILLIAM H. KELLIGAR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

**F. Martin, E. Falloon and Stewart & Munger, for appellant.**

**J. H. Broady, contra.**

**DUFFIE, C.**

In March, 1903, Mrs. Ida M. Heim received \$1,652.42 from her father's estate. The amount was sent her in a draft drawn by the Citizens State Bank of Keithburg, Illinois, on the Continental National Bank of Chicago. The testimony discloses that Mr. and Mrs. Heim, who reside on a farm near Dawson, intended to build a new dwelling house that season, and they concluded to deposit the money in some bank where it would draw interest as a time deposit for six months, and where it would be immediately available for use when they commenced their build-

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ing operations. The bank at Dawson was not paying interest on deposits, and the testimony of the plaintiff is to the effect that she indorsed the draft in blank and gave it to her husband, who drove to Humboldt for the purpose of depositing it in the First National Bank at that place. F. W. Samuelson was president of the First National Bank of Humboldt and had occupied that position for about 20 years. Mr. Heim relates what took place between himself and Mr. Samuelson in the following language: "I stepped up to the window, and Mr. Samuelson came forward, and I told him my wife had some money and she wanted to leave it at the bank. I asked him if they were paying any interest on time deposits, and he asked me my name and where I was from, and I told him. He wanted to know what amount I had, and I told him, and I asked him how much interest he would pay if I left it six months, and he said, 'We usually pay but 3 per cent., but since you have come up here so far I will give you 4 per cent. I told him all right, I would leave it, and he went and wrote out a paper and handed it to me, and I took it.' The paper referred to, and which Samuelson gave in acknowledgment of the money, is in the following language: "F. W. Samuelson, Loans. \$1,652. Humboldt, Neb., Mar. 12, 1903. Pay to the order of Ida M. Heim \$1,652.42, sixteen hundred fifty-two and 42-100 dollars. Due in six months at 4% Int. F. W. Samuelson. Payable at The First National Bank, Humboldt, Neb." Mr. Heim returned with this paper to his home near Dawson, where he and his wife read and examined it, after which they put it in an envelope and placed it in the safe of Mr. Heim's brother, a merchant doing business in Dawson, where they kept other papers. Both Mr. and Mrs. Heim testified that they had never seen a certificate of deposit; and this was the first transaction of the kind they ever had and they supposed that the paper given them by Mr. Samuelson was regular in all respects. Samuelson failed in the summer or fall of 1903, and sent Mrs. Heim a notice stating that fact and requesting her to meet him in an office at Falls City. Upon

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receiving this notice the paper was taken from the safe, and its true character ascertained from the cashier of the bank at Dawson, and thereupon this action was commenced to recover from the bank the sum of \$1,652.42, which the petition alleges was deposited in the bank by Mrs. Heim. The petition contains a detailed statement of the facts. The answer of the bank is a general denial, except that it admits that Samuelson was president of the bank at the time of the transaction. The jury returned a verdict in favor of the plaintiff, upon which judgment was entered, and the defendant has appealed the case to this court.

Samuelson was called as a witness for the defendant, but, before giving his version of the occurrence, it might be well to state that Mrs. Heim had testified that she had never been in the Humboldt bank, and both Mrs. Heim and her husband testified that on the day of the transaction she visited her husband's mother and was there when Mr. Heim returned from Humboldt. His story of the transaction is as follows: "Q. Now, you may go on and tell the jury what took place at that time—what conversation took place between you and him at that time? A. It puts me in rather an embarrassing situation, for the reason Mrs. Heim testified she was not in the bank that day. Q. Go on and tell which one of them did this business. Give your version of it. A. Mr. and Mrs. Heim were both in the bank that day. Q. Now, who transacted that business with you, Mr. or Mrs. Heim? A. Mrs. Heim. Q. What conversation took place between you and Mrs. Heim leading up to this paper that Judge Broady introduced in evidence, the time check? A. Mrs. Heim and Mr. Heim came into the bank on the 13th day of March, 1903, and Mrs. Heim stepped up to the counter and asked what interest we would pay on money, or 'what interest will you pay on money,' and I asked her how much she wanted to leave, and she said about \$1,600. I asked her how long a time she wanted to leave it, and she said about six months. Q. What did you tell her? A. I said to her the bank was paying 3 per cent. interest, but that I would pay her 4 per cent. Q.

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What did she say? A. She then handed me the draft or check on some eastern bank, and she indorsed it, and then I went to my private check book and wrote a check payable to Mrs. Ida M. Heim for \$1,652.42, drawing 4 per cent. interest on six months time, payable at the First National Bank of Humboldt, Nebraska. Q. You say, at the time, she gave you the draft on some bank in the east? A. Yes, sir. Q. That is the draft introduced in evidence? A. I think so. Q. What did you do with that? A. I deposited the draft to my credit in the First National Bank of Humboldt." The defendant's evidence further showed that Samuelson had received credit on his pass book for the amount of this draft.

It is strenuously insisted by the bank that the transaction was one between Mrs. Heim and Samuelson; that the bank never received the money; that it was a loan made to Samuelson individually and for which the bank cannot be held liable. If we place the evidence of Mr. Heim and Mr. Samuelson side by side, and read the statement of each relating to what transpired in the bank, no express words used by the parties could make it clearer that Heim wished to deposit this money with the bank, and that Samuelson so understood it. Whether it was Mr. or Mrs. Heim who visited the bank, the purpose was to make a deposit, and not a personal loan to Samuelson. For nearly 20 years he had been president of the defendant bank. It is probably true that during this time he was engaged in many private transactions in which the bank had no interest, and it may be true that he borrowed money on his own account from outside parties, but the question asked him concerning this particular deposit was what interest the bank was paying on deposits, which was a clear indication that the customer wished to deal with the bank, and not with him in his individual capacity. The fact that he replied, "The bank is paying 3 per cent., but I will pay you 4 per cent.," could leave but one impression upon the mind of a customer who came for the purpose of making the deposit there, viz., that the bank would make an exception in his favor and that 4

per cent. would be allowed by the bank on that particular deposit. We must bear in mind that the customer went to the bank for the purpose of making a deposit, and with no thought of effecting a private loan; that the talk which he had was with the president of the institution; that Samuelson represented the institution, and what he said was taken by the customer as speaking for the bank. It was the bank that was speaking, in contemplation of the customer, and to make it a dealing with Samuelson individually a plain statement putting the customer upon notice and imparting knowledge of that fact should be made to appear. It is true that Samuelson did not, in words, represent that the paper given the Heims was the paper of the bank; but the circumstances of the case, the conversation had even on his own version of it, can leave no doubt that it led the customer to believe he was receiving a certificate of deposit issued for the bank and by the bank, and we have no doubt that Samuelson himself was fully aware that such was the case and desired it to be so understood. Actions often speak louder than words, and this is as true where fraud is attempted and perpetrated as in other matters.

Section 341 of our code is peculiarly applicable to the facts here shown. It provides: "When the terms of an agreement have been intended in a different sense by the parties to it, that sense is to prevail against either party in which he had reason to suppose the other understood it." Again, this case seems to be ruled by *Patterson v. First Nat. Bank*, 73 Neb. 384. *Ziegler v. First Nat. Bank*, 93 Pa. St. 393, is a case in point. We cannot do better than to quote the language of Judge Paxton in that case:

"When the plaintiff took his money to the First National Bank of Allentown, and handed it to the cashier for deposit, the bank became responsible therefor. The cashier was the executive officer of the bank, and authorized by the very nature of his office to receive money on deposit. After receiving it, no trick or fraud on his part, by means of which the money was passed over to Blumer & Co., a

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firm in which the bank officers were largely interested, and appeared to have had the control, could absolve the bank from its liability. No class of men have the confidence of the people to a greater extent than bank officers. Depositors do not deal with them at arm's length, and can be imposed upon with the greatest ease by such officials. It would be monstrous to allow them to take advantage of the ignorant and unwary, by reason of their position and the confidence which it inspires. It was doubtless a misfortune to this bank to have unworthy officials, if such should prove to be the case. It certainly was unwise to permit its chief officers to occupy a dual position with divided interests, but the consequences resulting therefrom cannot be visited upon those who dealt in good faith with the bank."

*Coleman v. First Nat. Bank*, 53 N. Y. 388; is also directly in point. In that case the plaintiff handed a sum of money to defendant's teller in defendant's banking office and over its counter, stating he desired to leave it on deposit with the bank. The teller gave him a certificate which was in form an acknowledgment that plaintiff had deposited the money with S. R. VanCampen and contained a personal obligation on the part of the latter to repay the amount. VanCampen was the bank president. The certificate was signed by him, but not in his official capacity. The bank was not named in it, and there was nothing on its face indicating that the money was deposited with the bank or that it assumed any obligation in respect thereto. Plaintiff did not read the certificate when he received it. In an action to recover the amount of the deposit, it was held that the plaintiff was not precluded by the certificate; that the doctrine of constructive notice of its contents from the fact of possession thereof did not apply, and that it was a question of fact for a jury whether the deposit was with the defendant or VanCampen.

In the case we are considering it is not entirely clear that the bank did not in fact get the benefit of this money. It is true that Samuelson testifies that he deposited the

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draft to his own private account, but the draft does not bear his indorsement. It is a rule so universally observed among bankers that judicial notice thereof may well be taken, that all deposits of paper of this character made either by regular customers or by officers and employees of the bank must bear the indorsement of the party making the deposit. This is for the purpose of informing the bank from whom the deposit came, and to allow its officers to trace the paper to the party from whom it was received in case inquiry and investigation become necessary. The objections to the instructions urged by the appellant do not require discussion. We think they were as favorable to the bank as the law and the testimony required. The jury were fully informed regarding the legal rules which should govern them in arriving at their verdict, and hyper-critical objections to instructions which fairly reflect the law of the case and which in reason are not calculated to mislead the jury should not be encouraged or work a reversal where no injustice has been done.

We recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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CHARLES P. HAHN ET AL., APPELLEES, v. THOMAS BONACUM, APPELLANT.\*

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,339.

1. **Mechanics' Liens: FORECLOSURE.** In a suit to foreclose a mechanic's lien for labor performed on a building under a contract, relief will not be denied the plaintiff because of a trifling omission in the performance of the contract, where there has been a substantial performance on his part.

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\* Rehearing denied. See opinion, p. 846, *post*.

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2. Evidence examined, and held to show a substantial performance on the part of the plaintiff and sufficient to entitle him to the relief granted.
3. Evidence as between the owner and a defendant lien-holder examined, and held sufficient to justify a finding in favor of the latter for a greater sum than that found by the trial court.
4. Liens: PRIORITIES. A mechanic's or materialman's lien duly filed within the time required by law takes precedence over a mortgage subsequently executed by the owner.

APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:  
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

*A. J. Sawyer, for appellant.*

*Billingsley & Greene, Kirkpatrick & Hager and Milton Schwind, contra.*

*ALBERT, C.*

On the 9th day of May, 1902, Charles Hahn, plaintiff, entered into a contract in writing with the defendant, Right Reverend Bishop Bonacum, whereby it was agreed that the plaintiff should furnish the labor for the brick work required in the erection of a certain building on the premises belonging to the bishop, in consideration whereof the bishop was to pay the plaintiff \$3,500. The bishop was to furnish the material. The work was to be performed to the satisfaction of the bishop and to the satisfaction of the superintendent employed by him to supervise the work. Payments were to be made as the work progressed, upon estimates made and signed by the superintendent, a certain percentage to be retained until the completion of the work. The contract also contains these provisions: "The last payment not to become due until sixty days after completion of the building, and the full payment and satisfaction of said contractor of all mechanics' liens or claims, if any, filed or made on said building on account of labor performed on account of said contractor. The aforementioned estimates to be furnished

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and signed by T. G. Kelly, superintendent. Provided, that before the last payment is made a certificate shall be obtained by the contractor from the clerk's office of Lancaster county, signed by said clerk, that he has carefully examined the records and finds no liens or claims recorded against said works or on account of said contractor.

\* \* \* Sixth. The party of the first part to have not less than ten bricklayers employed on the work daily.

\* \* \* Ninth. Should the contractor fail to finish the work on or before the twelfth day of August, 1902, or within the ninety working days agreed upon, he shall pay or allow the proprietor by way of liquidated damages the sum of ten (10) dollars *per diem* for each and every day thereafter the said works shall remain incomplete. When any instalment becomes due under the terms of this contract, the proprietor shall be entitled to deduct from the amount thereof any sum or sums such proprietor may have paid any subcontractor, laborer or other person for work done for said building to be used in the performance of this contract at the request or with the knowledge of said contractor, and on the payment of the balance of such instalment, after making such deduction, shall be discharged from the liability therefor." On the 16th day of December, 1902, the plaintiff filed a mechanic's lien against the property in question for labor furnished under the contract, including certain items of extra labor, which he claimed were furnished by him, but not included in the contract, claiming a lien on the property in the sum of \$1,312. On the 20th day of April, 1903, he commenced this suit for a foreclosure of his said lien, bringing in Ernest C. Thym, another lien-holder, and the Security Mutual Life Insurance Company, a mortgagee, as parties defendant.

Thym filed a cross-petition in which he also prayed the foreclosure of a lien against the same property for certain cut stone which he had furnished to the bishop for the construction of the building. His claim is based on a written contract whereby he agreed to furnish certain

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cut stone for a consideration of \$700. His lien also covers the following items which he claims to have furnished but which are not included in the contract: six stone caps of the value of \$42.60; 150 feet of stone belt course of the value of \$90; one stone platform in three pieces of the value of \$16; changing caps to nine-inch bed of the value of \$60. The material was furnished between the 1st day of April and the 21st day of October, 1902, the latter being the date the lien was filed. The insurance company also filed a cross-petition, praying that a certain mortgage executed to it by the bishop on the same property be established as a first lien on the premises. The mortgage was executed on the 22d day of October, 1902, and filed for record one day later. As to this mortgage there is no contest save as to the question of its priority.

As to the plaintiff's cause of action, the contest is between him and the bishop. One defense is that the plaintiff has never completed the work; another that the suit was prematurely brought, in that the plaintiff had never obtained a certificate from the clerk of Lancaster county showing that he, the clerk, had examined the records and found no liens against the property for work performed for the plaintiff by his workmen. Plaintiff's claim for extra work is denied. The bishop also filed several counterclaims against the plaintiff: (1) \$2,400 liquidated damages for 240 days' default after the 12th day of August, 1902, in the completion of the work under the contract; (2) \$240 damages for plaintiff's failure to keep 10 men at work daily on the building; (3) \$360 for pipes, tanks, barrels, an engine, etc., furnished to supply water for mixing the mortar; \$500 damage for the wrongful filing of the lien in question. Answering Thym's cross-petition, the bishop admits the contract, but denies that it was fully performed by Thym; he admits that certain "extras" were furnished by Thym, but denies that they were furnished in pursuance of any agreement between them, and puts in issue the reasonable value of the "extras" furnished. He also claims a payment of \$100, for which he asks credit.

He also pleads several counterclaims, or what are designated as counterclaims, consisting of alleged overcharges, damages for inferior material, and for failure to furnish certain items required by the terms of the contract, aggregating nearly \$1,000. As between the plaintiff and the defendant (the bishop) the court found in favor of the plaintiff on all issues save as to the extra labor, all claims therefor being disallowed. As between Thym and the bishop, the court found in favor of Thym on all the issues save as to the extras which were rejected. A decree was entered for the foreclosure of each lien, subject to the mortgage of the insurance company which the court held was a first lien on the premises. The bishop appeals.

First, as to the controversy between the plaintiff and the bishop. Several pages of the latter's brief are devoted to an argument to justify the disallowance of the extras by the trial court. While the argument has not served to convince the plaintiff, it appears to have reconciled him to the decree, for he now expresses his willingness to abide by it; consequently, the plaintiff's claim for extras requires no further attention. This brings us to the bishop's contention that the work was not completed according to the terms of the contract. This contention is grounded on three propositions: (1) That two openings for stove-pipes were not left in the flues; (2) that some brick work was left unfinished; (3) that the debris had not been removed from some of the flues, whereby they could not be used.

As to the first, the evidence justifies a finding that the openings were not provided for by the contract. As to the second, the evidence shows that it was completed in a couple of hours by a third party employed by the bishop. The third was not discovered until sometime in the winter following the date fixed for the completion of the contract. The entire contention has the appearance of an after-thought. No testimony was offered by the bishop tending to show what it would have cost to complete the building in the particulars mentioned, but the plaintiff testified

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that it would not have cost \$3. He also testified that on the 10th day of December, 1902, he asked the superintendent whether he was required to do anything further to complete the contract, and was informed that he was not, and that the work was in fact completed within the time fixed by the contract. On the same day the superintendent made out the final estimate of the work, and stated therein that \$593 was the final amount due the plaintiff under the contract. Still later, in a letter published under the direction of the bishop, the reason given for his refusal to make final settlement was that a suit had been entered against the plaintiff by the widow of a laborer who had been killed on the building for damages, and that, in thus refusing, he was acting on the advice of counsel. In view of all the evidence, we think the court was amply justified in finding that there had been a substantial performance by the plaintiff of his part of the contract. That is all that is required, and the slight omissions, even if they exist, would not defeat a recovery. *Leeds v. Little*, 42 Minn. 144; *Woodward v. Fuller*, 80 N. Y. 312; *Heckmann v. Pinkney*, 81 N. Y. 211; *Crouch v. Gutmann*, 134 N. Y. 45, 30 Am. St. Rep. 608, and note.

It is also insisted that the plaintiff must fail in this action because he failed to furnish a certificate from the county clerk, showing that no liens had been filed against the property for labor performed for him. True, the contract provides for such certificate, but the evidence shows no such liens, nor is it claimed that any existed. The time for filing such liens had expired long before the suit was tried. It is a maxim of equity that it looks to the substance, rather than to the form. No substantial right of the bishop has been violated by the failure to furnish such certificate. It does not appear that he ever insisted upon it, but, as we have seen, based his refusal to settle on other grounds. No advantage could result to him by requiring the plaintiff to furnish the certificate, and to require it at this time would be to sacrifice the substance for the form, and to require what would be purely a work

of supererogation. We think the court very properly disregarded this part of the defense.

We come now to the bishop's counterclaims against the plaintiff. Two items thereof, aggregating \$2,640, are for damages for failure to perform the work within the time fixed by the contract, and to keep ten bricklayers at work daily on the work. Without going into this claim, which is unreasonable on its face, it will suffice to say the evidence is ample to sustain a finding of a substantial completion of the work within the time fixed by the contract, and that, as we have seen, is sufficient. Another item is \$360 for pipes, tanks, etc., required to furnish water used in doing the work. The bishop was to furnish the material, and water, it appears, falls within that category in this instance as the parties construed the contract before this controversy arose. As to the \$500 item for damages sustained by the bishop by reason of the wrongful filing of plaintiff's lien, it is now tacitly conceded to be without merit, hence, it requires no further notice. The court awarded the plaintiff \$593, with interest from October 18, 1902. This is exactly the amount the superintendent gave as the fixed estimate, and practically the same as that stated in the bishop's public letter hereinbefore mentioned. The decree as between the plaintiff and the bishop appears to be equitable, and the latter, at least, has no just ground to complain of it. After the decree was entered the plaintiff's claim was assigned to Robert J. Greene, and by order of the court he was substituted as plaintiff.

We come now to the controversy between Thym and the bishop. To understand this it should be stated that Thym operated a stone-cutting establishment in Kansas City under the trade name of Carthage Stone Yard. He also acted as agent for a corporation, known as Carthage Stone Company of Carthage, Missouri. The two establishments were wholly disconnected save as to Thym's agency for the corporation, but he was sole proprietor of the establishment in Kansas City. The corporation furnished rough stone; Thym furnished cut or dressed stone. Each

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had a contract to furnish some of the material for the building in question, but they were separate and distinct, and were so recognized by all parties. The contract of the corporation was in the corporate name; Thym's was signed by him. The defenses urged against Thym's claim, for the most part, are based on transactions had between the bishop and said corporation and for which Thym is in no way liable. The evidence as to these matters is scattered through the entire record and it would be profitless to review it at length. For example, the alleged payment of \$100 for which the bishop asks credit on Thym's account was made by a check, payable to the Carthage Stone Company, and bears its indorsement. The evidence shows that the bishop received credit therefor on the account of that corporation. Eliminating the evidence bearing solely on the bishop's transactions with the corporation, the controversy between him and Thym narrows down to a few items, which we shall proceed to notice. First, as to the counterclaims, which are narrowed down to these items: \$13 for cutting down 26 caps; \$30 for recutting large flue caps; \$26 for not cutting water drips. As to the first two, the evidence is abundantly sufficient to sustain a finding against the bishop. As to the third, the contract called for the "water drips," and Thym furnished them, but they were not cut just as the plans called for. They were used, however, without change, and there is no evidence showing the extent the bishop was damaged, if at all, by this deviation from the plans. Consequently, a finding against him as to that item is the only finding thereon that could be sustained. The same may be said of all the items included in the counterclaims.

Thym's claim for "extras" was wholly disallowed. The bishop admits that one of the items thereof should have been allowed, namely, for 150 feet of "stone belt course." The reasonable value of this item according to the undisputed evidence is \$90, and it should have been allowed. There is another item, namely, "stone platform in three pieces," which the bishop admits he received, but which he

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claims was used for other purposes. The evidence is clear that this item was furnished by Thym outside the contract and was worth \$16. It also should have been allowed. There is still another item, six stone caps for windows, that should have been allowed. These six windows were not included in the original plans and were ordered after the contract was made. The evidence satisfies us that these window caps were "extra," and shows that they were reasonably worth \$42.60. As to the remaining items, it must suffice to say that the record justifies the trial court in rejecting them, but the three mentioned, aggregating \$148.60, should be added to the amount found due Thym by the trial court. The trial court awarded him \$823.32, with interest from December 29, 1904, the date of the decree. Thym contends that he is entitled to interest from six months after the date of the last item, which was furnished June 23, 1902. No date of payment is fixed by the contract, and he is entitled to interest for at least the time claimed, which would be from December 23, 1902. In short, Thym is entitled to recover of the bishop \$965.92, with interest thereon from the 23d day of June, 1902, at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum.

There remains to be considered the question of the priority of the mortgage of the insurance company. The plaintiff's lien was filed December 16, and Thym's October 22, 1902. Each was filed within 60 days from the completion of the contract upon which it is based. Comp. St. 1901, ch. 54, art. I, sec. 2. Both liens therefore attached to the property before the mortgage, which was executed October 22, 1902, and filed for record the following day. *Henry & Coatsworth Co. v. Fisherwick*, 37 Neb. 207. The decree of the district court, therefore, making their liens subordinate to that of the insurance company is erroneous.

It is therefore recommended that the cause be remanded to the district court, with directions to modify the decree in accordance with this opinion.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

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By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, this cause is remanded to the district court, with directions to modify the decree in accordance with this opinion.

**REVERSED.**

The following opinion on motion for rehearing was filed October 18, 1906. *Rehearing denied:*

**ALBERT, C.**

One matter discussed in the brief on rehearing is that no cross-appeal was taken. This is a mistake. The cross-appellant filed a brief in due season pointing out certain errors of which he complained. That is all that is required to perfect a cross-appeal. *Meade Plumbing, H. & L. Co. v. Irvin*, 77 Neb. 385. It is also pointed out that at one place in the opinion we inadvertently used the words June 23 instead of December 23, as the date from which interest should be computed on Thym's claim. While the error, owing to the context, could hardly be misleading, it should be corrected.

It is recommended that the error in the dates herein mentioned be corrected, and the motion overruled.

By the Court: For the reasons above stated, the decree is modified so as to allow interest from December 23, 1902, and the motion for rehearing is

**OVERRULED.**

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**EDWIN H. LAHRMAN, APPELLANT, v. ELLA BAUMAN ET AL.,  
APPELLEES.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,357.

**Notes: Defense of Fraud: Burden of Proof.** In an action by the indorsee against the maker, where fraud in the inception of the note is relied on as a defense and shown by the evidence, the burden is upon the plaintiff to show that he is a *dona fide* holder.

APPEAL from the district court for Holt county: JAMES J. HARRINGTON, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*Alexander Searl, E. H. Benedict and John C. Landis, Jr.,* for appellant.

*M. F. Harrington, contra.*

**ALBERT, C.**

This is an appeal to reverse a judgment rendered against the plaintiff in an action on a promissory note brought by the indorsee against the makers. The defendants answered, admitting the execution and delivery of the note to plaintiff's indorser, but denying all other allegations of the petition. The answer also sets up two affirmative defenses: Fraud in the inception of the note, and a failure of consideration. The facts relied on as constituting those defenses are thus pleaded in the answer: "The defendants aver that one E. F. Collins came to the home of these defendants about the 15th day of July, 1903, and fraudulently and falsely represented himself to be a practicing physician, and a duly authorized physician and surgeon authorized to practice medicine and surgery in Holt county, Nebraska, and that he was able and capable of curing all diseases to which the human system is heir, and each and every one of said representations were false, and known by said Collins to be false; that said Ella Bauman was then sick, having dizziness in the head and her nervous system affected, and said Collins falsely and fraudulently represented to these defendants that he could cure said disease and would treat her with medicine and cure her, and that each and every one of said representations was false and fraudulent and made with the intent to deceive, and that he further contracted, promised and agreed to cure her of said sickness, and contracted, promised and agreed that unless he did fully cure her of said sickness, the said promissory note should not be paid, and

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that the said consideration for said note was the contract, promise and agreement of said Collins to fully cure said Ella Bauman of her said sickness; that the said consideration wholly failed, and said Collins, when he obtained said note, knew and intended that it should fail, and that he has not treated her for said sickness, and has given no consideration whatever for said note." The evidence adduced on behalf of the plaintiff tended to show that the note was indorsed and transferred to him in the usual course of business, before maturity, and for a valuable consideration; that adduced on behalf of the defendants, that the note was given under the circumstances, upon the representations and for the consideration alleged in the answer. The plaintiff failed to reply, but no objection was made upon that ground, and the case was tried as though the allegations of the answer were denied.

In an action by the indorsee against the maker the rule is that, where fraud in the inception of the note is shown, the burden is upon the plaintiff to prove that he took the note without notice of the fraud. Selover, Negotiable Instruments, p. 234; *National Bank v. Miller*, 51 Neb. 156. The plaintiff wholly failed to bring himself within this rule, or to make any showing whatever of his want of notice of the fraud. That being true, a verdict for the defendants is the only one that could have been rendered under the law and the evidence. It responds to the issues, and accords with the instructions of the court. There appears to be no good reason for disturbing it.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

**ELMER E. SALISBURY, APPELLANT, v. PRESS PUBLISHING COMPANY, APPELLEE.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,379.

1. **Master and Servant: Appliances: Duty of Employee.** Ordinarily, it is the duty of an employer to use reasonable care that the tools and appliances which he furnishes his employees are reasonably fit and safe for the use for which they are furnished, but this does not relieve the employee from the exercise of his own judgment in the use thereof, and if he puts them to a use for which they are not designed or furnished, or subjects them to a strain beyond their capacity to bear, and is injured in consequence, the employer, in the absence of special circumstances, is not liable. *Standard Distilling & Distributing Co. v. Harris*, 75 Neb. 480.
2. **Instructions.** The statute requiring instructions to the jury to be in writing has no application to a mandatory direction to return a verdict in favor of one of the parties to the litigation.
3. **Directing Verdict.** On the facts stated, *held* that the trial court properly directed a verdict for the defendant.

**APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:  
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.***

*Field, Ricketts & Ricketts*, for appellant.

*Halleck F. Rose and W. B. Comstock*, contra.

**ALBERT, C.**

This is an appeal from a judgment in favor of the defendant in an action for personal injuries. The petition so far as is material is as follows: "The plaintiff complains of the defendant, for that on and prior to the 8th day of October, 1903, the defendant was a corporation duly organized under and by virtue of the laws of the state of Nebraska, and was extensively engaged in the printing, publication and circulation of certain newspapers, with its place of business in the building at the southwest corner of Thirteenth and N streets in the city of Lincoln, Nebraska; that the papers, so printed, published and circulated by

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the defendant were stacked and made ready for transfer to the postoffice on the third floor of the building occupied by it, and to facilitate the delivery of its sacks of mail from the third floor of said building to wagons on the street, it had theretofore caused to be constructed an iron chute attached to the south wall of its publishing house, and extending from the third floor thereof over and across the sidewalk to the pavement on Thirteenth street of said city, so that sacks of mail placed in the chute would be carried by gravity down the inclining chute to wagons on the street; that said chute was provided with a hinge or joint at the lot line, whereby that part of the chute that extended across and over the sidewalk space on the east side of the building, when not in use, might, by means of an apparatus operated by a rope, pulley and heavy iron weight, be turned over and doubled back on that part of the chute fastened to the building, and when loading mail, might be extended across and over the sidewalk to wagons in the street; that on the 8th day of October, 1903, the plaintiff proceeded to the defendant's place of business at Thirteenth and N streets in the city of Lincoln to transfer its sacks of mail to the postoffice, pursuant to orders from the defendant to plaintiff's employer. When plaintiff arrived at defendant's place of business, the sidewalk extension of the iron chute was doubled back, and before the plaintiff could receive the sacks of mail into his wagon from the third floor of defendant's building, it was necessary to extend the iron chute over and across the sidewalk by means of the apparatus provided by the defendant for such purpose. While the plaintiff was extending said chute across the sidewalk by means of the apparatus provided therefor by the defendant, and had his weight on the rope, and without any fault or negligence on his part, the apparatus provided by the defendant for raising and extending said chute gave way, precipitating the heavy iron weight used in connection therewith upon the plaintiff, breaking the bone of his right leg between the knee and the hip so that it protruded through the flesh, thereby seri-

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ously and permanently injuring the plaintiff. \* \* \* Plaintiff further alleges that the apparatus by which said iron chute carrying defendant's mail sacks to the street was doubled back or extended over and across the sidewalk was carelessly, negligently and insecurely constructed by the defendant, and was made of defective and unsuitable material for the purposes for which it was used, and the defendant carelessly, negligently and unnecessarily suspended said heavy iron weight, which fell upon plaintiff, directly above where plaintiff was compelled to stand to operate the apparatus in extending the chute over and across the sidewalk; that the giving way of said apparatus and the precipitation of said heavy weight upon plaintiff, resulting in his injury as hereinbefore alleged, was directly caused by the defective material used, and the negligent, careless and insecure manner in which defendant constructed said apparatus and suspended said heavy weight."

The answer charges that the plaintiff, in attempting to operate the chute at the time of the accident, was a mere volunteer or intermeddler, and was assisted by another intermeddler, without the knowledge or consent of the plaintiff; that they applied greater force to the rope used to operate the chute than the appliances provided for that purpose were intended to bear, and that the accident resulted in consequence thereof, and from no other cause. The reply is a general denial. At the close of the trial the court sustained a motion to direct a verdict for the defendant, and the correctness of that ruling is the principal question now presented by the record.

It is conclusively established that at the time of the accident the plaintiff was in the employ of a transfer company, which was under contract with the defendant to carry the printed -matter ready for the mails from the defendant's place of business to the postoffice. The amount of this matter was so great as to require drays to carry it. It was no part of the transfer company's duty under the contract to operate the chute described in the petition. But, while the chute was generally operated by the defend-

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ant's employees, it was a common practice, in case of delay on their part to do so, for the employees of the transfer company, after placing their wagons in position to be loaded, to raise and lower the chute to a position to deliver the mailing matter on the drays at the edge of the sidewalk. The plaintiff had done this on several occasions previous to the accident. On the day of the accident, the defendant notified the transfer company that it had some matter ready for delivery to the postoffice, and the plaintiff was sent in charge of a wagon to receive it. In this instance the matter was not such as could be loaded by means of the chute, but the plaintiff was not aware of that fact. He drove his wagon to defendant's place of business and placed it in position to be loaded by means of the chute; the defendant's employees were not aware of his arrival. He then undertook to extend the movable section of the chute across the sidewalk to his wagon. The movable section of the chute weighed about 200 pounds. It was connected with the other section by a joint, and, when not in use, was folded back upon it, along the side of the building. In order to raise and lower it a rope passed through a pulley overhead, one end of which was attached to the free end of the movable section, the other to a weight of 50 or 60 pounds used as a counterbalance. A rope hung from this weight to the ground, whereby one standing on the ground could raise and lower the movable section. Another rope was also used to overcome the "dead center" when the section was raised to the perpendicular. As the appliances were arranged the force necessary to apply to the rope to raise the chute, in addition to the counterbalance, was less than 50 pounds. When the plaintiff undertook to raise the chute at the time of the accident it had become fastened in some way and he was unable to raise it. A bystander volunteered to assist him, and joined him in pulling on the rope which extended downward from the counterbalance. The pulley broke and the counterweight fell, striking the plaintiff, who had fallen to the ground, breaking his leg.

The plaintiff contends that from the foregoing state of facts, in which we have tried to include every fact favorable to him which the evidence proves or tends to establish, two propositions are deducible: (1) That at the time of the accident he stood in the relation of employee to the defendant, and in attempting to operate the chute was acting within the scope of his employment; (2) that his injury was the proximate result of a negligent omission on the part of the defendant to furnish reasonably safe appliances for the operation of the chute. A large part of the argument on either side is directed to the first proposition. But we do not deem it necessary to go into that question because, were it resolved in favor of the plaintiff, it seems clear to us the plaintiff must still fail. Assuming that the plaintiff's relation to the defendant was that of an employee, then it was undoubtedly the duty of the defendant to see that the appliances furnished him for use in his employment were reasonably safe for the use for which they were furnished. But it is equally true that an employer is not liable for injuries to an employee caused by the unauthorized or improper use of appliances, and that the latter is bound to exercise reasonable care to protect himself from injury. 20 Am. & Eng. Ency. Law (2d ed.), pp. 134-141, and notes. In this case the pulley and its connections were furnished to bear the strain necessary to overcome a weight of about 100 pounds. Owing to the counterweight, a force of 50 pounds applied to the rope hanging from the counterweight would raise the movable section of the chute. The mechanism was simple, and hung in plain sight. The plaintiff was acquainted with it. In view of these facts, when he, a man weighing over 175 pounds, was unable by his own strength to raise the chute, he must have known as a reasonable person that the ropes had fouled or for some other reason the appliance was not in proper working order, and that the combined strength of himself and another man exerted on the rope would subject the pulley and its fastenings to a greater strain than they were calculated to bear. He was in a

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position of obvious danger, with the weight which fell on his leg suspended overhead. While it is the duty, ordinarily, of an employer to use reasonable care that the tools and appliances which he furnishes his employees are reasonably safe, the employees are not relieved from the exercise of their own judgment in the use of such tools and appliances, and when they put such tools and appliances to a use for which they are not intended, or subject them to a strain beyond their capacity to bear, and are injured in consequence, ordinarily, no liability attaches to the employer. *Standard Distilling & Distributing Co. v. Harris*, 75 Neb. 480. In this case, the rope and pulley were furnished to overcome a definite weight. The plaintiff, instead of confining their use to that end, blindly undertook to use them to overcome some unknown force or obstruction interfering with the operation of the chute, and subjected them to a strain many times greater than was required to serve the purpose for which they were furnished. In doing so he acted under no command, but purely on his own volition, and his injury resulted, not from the omission of the defendant to provide a reasonably safe appliance for operating the chute, but from his misuse of the appliance furnished, and his own omission to make reasonable use of his own faculties to guard against injury.

The plaintiff contends that the judgment must be reversed because the direction to return a verdict for the defendant was given orally, and in support of this contention, invokes the statute requiring all instructions to be in writing, unless such requirement be waived. The statute has reference to instructions proper, that is, instructions given to guide the jury in their deliberations when some issue of fact is submitted for their determination. Where there is no such issue to submit, a mere mandatory direction, which is in no proper sense an instruction, is all that is required, and like other rulings of the court may be given orally.

Complaint is also made of the exclusion of certain evidence tending to sustain plaintiff's theory that at the time

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of the injury he stood in the relation of employee to the defendant. As we have seen, that relationship may be assumed, and still the record would necessitate an affirmance of the judgment, hence, further notice of this assignment is unnecessary.

What has been said disposes, we think, of all the assignments, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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**FLAVIA WATTERS, ADMINISTRATRIX, APPELLEE, v. CITY OF OMAHA, APPELLANT.\***

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,855.

**Cities: PUBLIC WORKS: LIABILITIES.** Where a city in the erection of a public work exercises reasonable care and judgment, and adopts plans approved and recommended by engineers having all the knowledge that skill and experience in such work would naturally give them, it should not be held liable in damages on account of an alleged defect in the plan, unless the construction is so manifestly dangerous that all reasonable minds must agree that it was unsafe.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county: HOWARD KENNEDY, JR., JUDGE. Reversed.

*Harry E. Burnam, I. J. Dunn and A. G. Ellick*, for appellant.

*Weaver & Giller and John M. Macfarland, contra.*

JACKSON, C.

The plaintiff, as administratrix of the estate of her deceased husband, recovered judgment against the defendant city because of the death of the decedent, which it is

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\* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 859, *post*.

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alleged occurred through the negligent acts of the defendant. The deceased was a laborer in the employ of a distilling company, and was returning to his home by way of Eleventh street. On this street is a viaduct over the Union Pacific and Burlington railroad tracks. The viaduct covers a distance of four blocks or more, and an open stairway extends from the roadway of the viaduct into one of the streets below, constructed for the convenience of foot passengers. The deceased was seen to turn into this stairway, and an instant later to fall into the street. He sustained injuries from which his death occurred within two or three hours. His only statement about the fall was that he slipped. It is charged in the petition that he slipped upon one of the steps which had become worn and slippery on account of continuous rainfall for several days previous to the accident. Negligence is attributed to the city because the railing at the stairway was not sufficiently high to prevent persons from falling over, because of a failure to cover the stairway and because of the rise exceeding six inches in twelve, thereby rendering the descent dangerously steep.

The evidence discloses without question that the viaduct and stairway were constructed jointly by the city of Omaha and the railroad company over whose tracks it was built. Plans and specifications were submitted by contractors, and the one adopted had the approval of Andrew Rosewater, city engineer of the defendant, the chief engineer of the Burlington railroad company, the chairman of the board of public works of the defendant, at one time chief engineer of the Union Pacific Railroad Company, and another engineer who had occupied a similar position. They were all of recognized and known ability and eminent as civil engineers. They recommended the adoption and approval of the plans by the board of public works, and acting upon their advice and recommendation the plans were adopted by that board and afterwards approved by the city council. The viaduct was constructed according to these plans and specifications. The

same is true of the stairway and railing, although action was taken at a later date, but prior to the construction of the bridge. Mr. Rosewater was a witness at the trial and testified that the railings were of standard manufacture and height. There is no claim of a defective construction, and the single question presented by the record is the sufficiency of the evidence to sustain the verdict of the jury and judgment of the court. The railing is two feet six inches above the outer edge of the step and about three feet above the inner edge.

Special interrogatories were submitted to the jury, who found that the accident occurred because the city did not build the banisters of sufficient height. The contention of the city is that, based upon this finding, the verdict cannot stand. The position of the defendant in this respect is fortified by abundant authority and, in our judgment, well taken. In planning a public work municipal authorities are required to exercise reasonable care and judgment, and if the services of professional men, experts in the work contemplated, are needed, they should employ those who have all the knowledge and skill that experience in such work would naturally give them. *Diamond Match Co. v. Town of New Haven*, 55 Conn. 510. When that course has been pursued in good faith, and the work has been carried on and completed as planned and specified, the municipality should not be held responsible, unless the structure is so manifestly dangerous that all reasonable minds must agree that it was unsafe. *Gould v. City of Topeka*, 32 Kan. 485. The principle involved was recently thoroughly discussed in *Shannon v. City of Omaha*, 73 Neb. 507, in an opinion by Mr. Commissioner LETTON, now a justice of this court, and was sustained to that degree contended for by the defendant. Any other rule would render precautionary measures on the part of municipal authorities without avail, and the judgment of engineers skilled in their profession would afford no protection, because the possibility of accident cannot be provided against, and, after all, it became a question for a jury, who out of just sympathy for

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a bereaved family might readily find the existence of negligence, notwithstanding the exercise of the highest degree of caution and the employment of the best skill obtainable. There may be a difference of opinion whether the rail or banister on the stairway where the accident occurred was of sufficient height to afford the proper protection to the public, but we are not prepared to say, as a matter of law, that it was insufficient.

Such of the authorities cited by plaintiff as we have examined are easily distinguishable from the case at bar. *Blyhl v. Village of Waterville*, 57 Minn. 115, is a case where, in the construction of a walk along a part of a block, at the junction of the old walk there was left a drop of some seven or eight inches, and, passing along there in the night season, a person struck his foot against the face of the drop, fell and was injured. As a matter of law such an imperfect construction was manifestly dangerous. In *McDonald v. City of Duluth*, 93 Minn. 206, it appeared that in constructing a rail over the sides of a bridge one of the guard rails was imperfectly placed and not sufficiently fastened, it was loose and liable at any time to slip out of place and over the bridge. The supreme court of Minnesota, however, so far as we are able to determine, has never departed from the rule that, if reasonable minds might differ as to whether the plan adopted or some other plan is the better, the decision of the city authorities on the question is conclusive and cannot be reviewed by the courts. That rule is expressly recognized in *Conlon v. City of St. Paul*, 70 Minn. 216. Authorities may be found holding, in effect, that, although streets are built and maintained according to plans adopted, if they are so built as to cause an obstruction or impediment to travel, the city might still be liable; but none of these authorities are applicable to this case.

We are convinced that the verdict of the jury has no support in the evidence, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**REVERSED.**

The following opinion on rehearing was filed February 8, 1907. *Judgment of reversal adhered to:*

**ALBERT, C.**

In this case, as in ordinary cases grounded on negligence, the acts or omissions of the defendant upon which the charge of negligence is based are to be tested by the conduct of a man of ordinary care and prudence in like circumstances. The improvement of which the stairway in question is a part is of such a character that it could be planned and constructed only by men of peculiar skill and knowledge in that line. The city authorities therefore were compelled to employ experts to plan and construct it. In doing so they did precisely what a man of ordinary care and prudence would have done in like circumstances. Where, then, is the point of departure from the course of conduct such a man would have pursued? Is it in the adoption of the plan? They had employed men skilled in their profession to prepare it. Had they not a right to rely on the superior judgment and skill of such men? Would not a man of ordinary care and prudence have done so in like circumstances, unless the plan was so obviously defective that there could be no difference of opinion among reasonable men with respect to it?

On account of the engineering problems involved, there is a strong analogy between an improvement of this character and the construction of sewers, and the cases growing out of the latter, on that account, have a strong bearing on the case at bar. In the study of those cases, however, the distinction between a defect in a plan and a defect in the execution of the plan should be kept in mind. In *Johnston v. District of Columbia*, 118 U. S. 19, it was said:

"The duties of the municipal authorities, in adopting a

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general plan of drainage, and determining when and where sewers shall be built, of what size and at what level, are of a *quasi* judicial nature, involving the exercise of deliberate judgment and large discretion, and depending upon considerations affecting the public health and general convenience throughout an extensive territory; and the exercise of such judgment and discretion, in the selection and adoption of the general plan or system of drainage, is not subject to revision by a court or jury in a private action for not sufficiently draining a particular lot of land."

To the same effect are the following: *Fair v. City of Philadelphia*, 88 Pa. St. 309, 32 Am. Rep. 455; *Mills v. City of Brooklyn*, 32 N. Y. 489; *Child v. City of Boston*, 4 Allen (Mass.), 41, 81 Am. Dec. 680; *Attwood v. City of Bangor*, 83 Me. 582; *Wicks v. Town of DeWitt*, 54 Ia. 130; *Merrifield v. City of Worcester*, 110 Mass. 216, 14 Am. Rep. 592; *Van Pelt v. City of Davenport*, 42 Ia. 308, 20 Am. Rep. 622; *Foster v. City of St. Louis*, 71 Mo. 157; *City of Denver v. Capelli*, 4 Colo. 25, 34 Am. Rep. 62. In *City of Detroit v. Beckman*, 34 Mich. 125, this rule was limited somewhat, the court holding that municipal corporations are not liable for injuries resulting from the plan of a public work as distinguished from its mode of execution, unless such plan must necessarily result in an invasion of private property. Judge Dillon commends this rule as thus limited. 2 Dillon, Municipal Corporations, secs. 1046, 1047.

In the adoption of a plan the city was not entirely free-handed. The character of the location, the necessities of street traffic, and the safety of the public, all had to be taken into account. The sum total of the advantages and disadvantages of the improvement had to be weighed and set over against each other. The adoption of plans therefore was not a mere ministerial act, but one of a *quasi* judicial nature, and ought not to be subject to revision by a jury in a private action. I am unable to discover any difference in principle between this case and that of an

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employer who acts upon the advice of experts as to the tools and appliances to be used, or a railroad company which adopts the devices and appliances in common use and recommended by experts. See *O'Neill v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 66 Neb. 638.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, our former judgment is adhered to.

REVERSED.

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**KEARNEY COUNTY, APPELLEE, v. CHICAGO, BURLINGTON &  
QUINCY RAILWAY COMPANY, APPELLANT.**

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,372.

1. **Railroads: Fires: Evidence.** In an action for damages for negligently setting out a fire, the origin of the fire may be proved by circumstantial evidence.
2. Evidence examined, and held that the circumstances proved are sufficient to sustain the verdict of the jury as to the origin of the fire by reason of which the plaintiff sustained damages.

APPEAL from the district court for Kearney county:  
**ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. Affirmed.**

*J. W. Deweese and F. E. Bishop, for appellant.*

*Lewis C. Paulson, contra.*

**JACKSON, C.**

The county of Kearney recovered judgment against the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railway Company for the loss of a bridge by fire, which it is charged was negligently set out by the company. On appeal the railway company submit the case on the single question of the insufficiency of the evidence to show the origin of the fire.

The burned bridge was about one mile south of the railway track. On the day of the fire a high wind was blow-

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ing from the northwest. John Kroskurth, a witness for the plaintiff, lives about three-quarters of a mile from the bridge and about 60 rods from the railway track. He testified that he saw a train passing over the defendant's line, and about five minutes afterwards discovered the fire south of the railway track about a quarter of a mile burning in the direction of the bridge, and had burned over the ground to within three or four rods of the track. George Kroskurth, another witness on behalf of the plaintiff, testified to substantially the same facts, except that he testified that the ground had been burned over to within two or three rods of the track. There is no conflict in the evidence, and no other theory of the origin of the fire advanced, except the one that it was caused by sparks escaping from a passing train. The evidence is not entirely satisfactory, but the circumstances are such that minds might reasonably differ as to the deductions to be drawn, and in such cases the verdict of the jury should not be disturbed.

We recommend that the judgment be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

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JAMES WRIGLEY, APPELLANT, v. FARMERS & MERCHANTS STATE BANK OF BEATRICE, APPELLEE.

FILED JUNE 8, 1906. No. 14,375.

**Banks: Drafts: Limitations.** Where the holder of a bank draft neither demands payment of the bank on which it is drawn nor takes any other step to secure payment within five years from the time it came into his possession, his right of action against the bank issuing the draft because of the failure of the bank on which it was drawn to pay the same when it was presented is barred by the statute of limitations.

APPEAL from the district court for Gage county: WILLIAM H. KELLIGAR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*E. O. Kretsinger*, for appellant.

*Rinaker & Bibb*, contra.

JACKSON, C.

On August 10, 1894, the Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Beatrice, Nebraska, sold to Robert Wrigley a draft on the American Exchange National Bank of Lincoln, Nebraska, for the sum of \$90. This draft was immediately indorsed by Robert Wrigley, and by indorsement made payable to James Wrigley, the plaintiff, appellant herein, and was either delivered or sent to plaintiff at Broken Bow, Nebraska, on the day it was issued. At any rate, it was received by the plaintiff within a day or two of the date of its issuance, and was by him mislaid and forgotten until the month of October, 1899, when he discovered the draft in an inside vest pocket. In the meantime the American Exchange National Bank of Lincoln had consolidated with the First National Bank of Lincoln, and to the latter bank the plaintiff presented the draft for payment soon after its resurrection from his inside pocket. The Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Beatrice, prior to the presentment of the draft for payment, had gone into voluntary liquidation, paid all of its ascertained indebtedness, and distributed the balance of its assets among its stockholders. Its account at the American Exchange National Bank had been closed, and the First National Bank of Lincoln had no funds of the Farmers & Merchants State Bank with which to meet the draft at the time it was presented. After presenting the draft to the First National Bank of Lincoln for payment and ascertaining that there were no funds, the plaintiff left the draft at the Lincoln bank for collection. It was sent to Beatrice, where demand was made of the defendant for payment. Pay-

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ment was refused, and on April 7, 1903, this action was instituted in the county court of Gage county to recover payment from the defendant. From a judgment in that court the case was appealed to the district court, where the finding was against the plaintiff, and he appeals.

The trial court found that the action was barred by the statute of limitations, and the correctness of that conclusion is challenged, the contention of the appellant being that the cause of action against the appellee did not accrue until the draft was presented for payment in November, 1899. Counsel for appellant has presented an interesting discussion of the distinction between a draft drawn by one bank on another and a bank check drawn by a customer. We are inclined, however, to adopt the view of the counsel for appellee that the distinction is not important to the inquiry. In *Scroggin v. McClelland*, 37 Neb. 644, it was held that the statute of limitations commences to run in favor of the drawer of a check, at the latest, after the lapse of a reasonable time for the presentment of the check. We see no reason for adopting a different rule in favor of the holder of a bank draft.

It is urged, however, that the case of *Scroggin v. McClelland* was overruled by *Connor v. Becker*, 56 Neb. 343. The question involved and determined in the latter case was whether the cause of action was barred by the statute of limitations in four years, as contended by one of the parties, or in five years, as insisted by the other party. There was, in fact, a demand in that case, and the question of when the demand should be made was not involved in the inquiry and was not determined. The rule there stated is:

“An action on a check by the holder against the maker after demand of the drawee and nonpayment is a suit on a written instrument, within the meaning of section 10 of the code of civil procedure, and the limitation is five years.”

The general rule seems to be that, where a demand is necessary, the demand must be made and the action com-

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menced within the statute of limitations. *Brust v. Barrett*, 16 Hun (N. Y.), 409; *Palmer v. Palmer*, 36 Mich. 487; *Lower v. Miller*, 66 Ia. 408. The reason for the rule is that it was the right of the creditor by his own act to make the demand payable. He might by such act have perfected his cause of action, and it would be both unjust and unreasonable to hold that he could postpone indefinitely the time for enforcing his claim. The supreme court of Ohio seems to have adopted a somewhat different rule, but under the holdings in that state the demand, at least, must be made within the statute of limitations. *Keithler v. Foster*, 22 Ohio St. 27. The same principle is involved and determined in *Atchison, T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Burlingame Township*, 36 Kan. 628.

There having been neither a demand of payment nor action instituted to secure payment within the time fixed by the statute of limitations, the judgment of the district court was right, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE, C., concurs.

ALBERT, C. I concur in the conclusion.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

**AFFIRMED.**

LETTON, J., not sitting.



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3. A contract in writing for the adoption of a child, though ineffective as a legal adoption, may be enforced in equity.  
*Pemberton v. Heirs of Pemberton*..... 669

**Estates.**

There can be no merger where intervening rights or estates interfere, nor where the intention to keep the estates separate can be inferred. *Topliff v. Richardson*..... 114

**Estoppel. See APPEAL AND ERROR, 2. INSURANCE, 15. JUDICIAL SALES, 1. PUBLIC LANDS, 3.**

1. Where a widow purchased the heirs' interest in a homestead, and they remained silent for more than ten years, held they are estopped from asserting title against the widow's grantee. *Staats v. Wilson*..... 204
2. Where one pleads an estoppel the burden is on him to establish it. *Perkins v. Missouri P. R. Co.*..... 242

**Evidence. See APPEAL AND ERROR, 4-7. COMPROMISE AND SETTLEMENT, 5. CONTRACTS, 13, 14. CRIMINAL LAW, 1, 2.**

1. To prove damages a witness should state facts and not conclusions. *City of McCook v. McAdams*..... 1
2. Evidence which tends to negative that offered by defendant to establish an affirmative defense is not objectionable as not proper rebuttal. *City of McCook v. McAdams*..... 1
3. Proof of a statute of a sister state and of a judicial record appointing trustees held sufficient. *Topliff v. Richardson*.. 114

**Evidence—Concluded.**

4. No proof is needed of admitted facts. *Kannow & Sons v. Farmers C. S. Ass'n* ..... 330
5. An expert accountant may testify to the results of an examination and computation of complicated accounts, the books or memoranda making up the account being first introduced in evidence. *Kannow & Sons v. Farmers C. S. Ass'n* ..... 330
6. It is sufficient foundation for the introduction of letters to show that they were received in due course of mail in answer to letters written by an agent to his principal, and duly mailed to the address of the party sought to be bound. *Peycke v. Shinn* ..... 364
7. Nonexpert witnesses to the mental capacity of a testator must state the facts. *Isaac v. Halderman* ..... 823

**Execution.**

- In a sale on execution under sec. 497 of the code, notice of the sale must be published for 30 days. *Young v. Figg* ..... 526

**Executors and Administrators. See WILLS.**

1. In appointing an administrator the court exercises its discretion, and on appeal the issue is for the court and not for the jury. *In re Estate of Scott* ..... 28
2. Where the next of kin are unable to agree on an administrator and the probate court appoints one other than the next of kin, the appointment will not be disturbed unless there is an abuse of discretion. *In re Estate of Scott* ..... 28
3. When the next of kin disagree as to an administrator, and the court appoints one requested by one of the next of kin, it will not be presumed, in the absence of evidence, that the court abused its discretion. *In re Estate of Scott* ..... 30
4. A corporation cannot act as an administrator under the laws of this state. *Continental Trust Co. v. Peterson* ..... 411
5. Evidence held to sustain finding that a former administrator received certain money as a gift and not as assets of the estate. *Foster v. Murphy* ..... 576

**Fraud.**

1. False representations as the basis of an action are such only as mislead a party to his damage. *Jakway v. Proudfit*, 62
2. In an action for false representations in the sale of stock, exclusion of evidence held prejudicial. *Jakway v. Proudfit*, 62
3. In an action for false representations in the sale of stock, instructing that, if representations of indebtedness of the corporation were false, though no damage accrue, plaintiff may rescind, held error. *Jakway v. Proudfit* ..... 62

**Fraud—Concluded.**

4. Every contracting party has a right to rely on a statement of fact, the truth of which is known to the opposite party, and unknown to him. *Farley v. Weiss*..... 402
5. Instructions as to measure of damages in an action for fraud in the sale of land, held not prejudicial. *Farley v. Weiss* ..... 402

**Fraudulent Conveyances.**

1. Where a transfer is made when the grantor's indebtedness is small compared with the value of his property, and is secured by a mortgage, the *bona fides* of the transaction is established. *Seeley v. Ritchey*..... 433
2. Evidence held sufficient to overcome presumption of fraud in a transfer from father to son. *Seeley v. Ritchey*..... 433
3. A conveyance made by father to son, or other near relative, is presumptively fraudulent as to existing creditors. *Seeley v. Ritchey* ..... 427
4. Evidence held not to overcome presumption of fraud arising from a conveyance by father to son. *Seeley v. Ritchey*..... 427

**Gifts.**

1. The indorsement and delivery of a certificate of deposit, with the intent of making a gift of the deposit, operates as a gift of the fund. *Foster v. Murphy*..... 576
2. Evidence held to establish a gift of notes and a mortgage. *Adams v. Dennis*..... 682

**Health.**

- Complaint held not to charge the manufacture of cigarettes within the meaning of the statute. *Dempsey v. Stout*..... 152

**Highways.**

1. To establish a highway by prescription there must be a user by the public under claim of right, and adverse to the owner, of a defined way or track, for a period of ten years. *Nelson v. Sneed*..... 201
2. The decision of the expediency of establishing or vacating a public road is vested in county boards and other like agencies, and is not subject to judicial review. *Otto v. Conroy* ..... 517

**Homicide.** See CRIMINAL LAW, 5, 6. JURY.**Husband and Wife.**

- A married woman may convey her lands, other than a home- stead, without her husband joining in the conveyance. *Jordan v. Jackson*..... 15

**Infants.**

1. A judgment against a minor will not be set aside on account of his minority unless the action for that purpose is commenced within one year after the minor arrives at the age of 21 years, as provided in sec. 442 of the code. *McGreary v. Creighton*..... 179
2. While in possession under a lease, the plea of infancy is not available in a suit to restrain an infant from inflicting irreparable injuries upon his landlord. *Cole v. Manners*.... 454

**Injunction.**

1. Where the nature and frequency of trespasses prevent or threaten rights of possession and property in land, an injunction will be granted. *Sillasen v. Winterer*..... 52
2. The title to a public office and the right to exercise the functions thereof by one claiming title thereto by election, cannot be determined in a suit for injunction. *School District v. Cowgill*..... 317
3. An injunction suit cannot be maintained to restrain the teaching of school by a qualified teacher under a contract signed by *de facto* officers of the school district. *School District v. Cowgill*..... 317
4. An injury which cannot be measured by any pecuniary standard or compensated in damages is irreparable. *Cole v. Manners* .. 454
5. Pleadings and evidence in a suit to enjoin lessees from permitting lessor entering under his lease held to sustain decree. *Cole v. Manners* ..... 454

**Insane Persons.**

1. Where mental capacity to maintain a suit is in issue, disposition is not a subject of expert investigation. *Simmons v. Kelsey* ..... 124
2. Where plaintiff understands the nature of her suit, and has the will to decide whether it be prosecuted, she has sufficient mental capacity to maintain it. *Simmons v. Kelsey*, 124

**Instructions.** See ADVERSE POSSESSION, 4. APPEAL AND ERROR, 11-17. BOUNDARIES. CARRIERS, 11. CRIMINAL LAW, 3-7. FRAUD, 3. MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS, 3-6. SALES, 12. TRIAL**Insurance.**

1. Where a policy of insurance contained a provision that if the buildings insured become vacant the policy shall be void, and after loss the company, being informed of the loss and the breach of condition, cancels the policy and retains the premium, held a waiver. *Farmers & Merchants Ins. Co. v. Bodge* ..... 31

**Insurance—Continued.**

2. A stipulation in a contract for insurance that the policy shall be void if the buildings insured become vacant, will be enforced. *Farmers & Merchants Ins. Co. v. Dodge*..... 35
3. The cancelation of a policy of insurance after loss and notice of facts constituting a forfeiture, and the return of unearned premium from date of forfeiture, held not a waiver. *Farmers & Merchants Ins. Co. v. Dodge*..... 35
4. Evidence in an action on a policy insuring against burglary held to justify submitting case to jury. *Maryland Casualty Co. v. Bank of Murdock*..... 314
5. Evidence of loss held insufficient. *British-American Ins. Co. v. Columbian Optical Co.*..... 312

**Beneficial Associations.**

6. Questions and answers in an application made part of a contract of insurance are construed most strongly against the insurer. *Modern Woodmen v. Wilson*..... 344
7. Whether in making answers in an application for insurance the applicant acted in good faith is a question for the jury. *Modern Woodmen v. Wilson*..... 344
8. In answer to a question in an application for insurance calling for ailments for which the assured has been treated, the assured may confine his answers to ailments which are serious. *Modern Woodmen v. Wilson*..... 344
9. Evidence held to sustain a finding that answers of assured were given in good faith. *Modern Woodmen v. Wilson*..... 344
10. If a beneficial association collects dues and mortuary assessments after knowledge of a forfeiture, it waives the forfeiture. *Pringle v. Modern Woodmen*..... 384
11. A subordinate lodge of a mutual benefit society and its clerk, designated by the supreme lodge to receive and forward dues and assessments, are agents of the supreme lodge. *Pringle v. Modern Woodmen*..... 388
12. The collection of assessments from a member convicted of a felony, by the clerk of a subordinate lodge, with knowledge of that fact, forwarded to and retained by the supreme lodge until after the death of the member, held a waiver of a forfeiture on the ground of such conviction. *Pringle v. Modern Woodmen*..... 388
13. Where the constitution of a benefit society requires initiation and payment of one assessment as indispensable to membership, no liability arises before compliance with these requirements. *Loyal Mystic Legion v. Richardson*..... 562
14. Where an insurance certificate provides that if the member engage in prohibited occupation the certificate becomes void

**Insurance—Concluded.**

- as to any claim for death traceable to employment in such occupation, the society is exempted from liability for death resulting therefrom, but otherwise the certificate remains in force. *Modern Woodmen v. Talbot*..... 621
15. A beneficial society is not estopped to claim exemption from liability for the death of a member, due to engaging in a prohibited occupation, by accepting dues and assessments with knowledge that he had entered such occupation. *Modern Woodmen v. Talbot*..... 621
16. Where the constitution and laws of a beneficial association provide that members shall pay one assessment each month, payment cannot be resisted on the ground that it was not lawfully made. *Sovereign Camp, W. O. W., v. Ogden*..... 643
17. In an action on a benefit certificate, an answer which set out the delinquency of the member held to state a defense. *Sovereign Camp, W. O. W., v. Ogden*..... 643

**Intoxicating Liquors.**

1. Where in a prosecution for a violation of sec. 20, ch. 50, Comp. St., intoxicating liquor is found in the possession of the accused, the statute makes such possession, when not satisfactorily explained, presumptive evidence of guilt. *O'Neil v. State* ..... 44
2. Evidence in a prosecution for unlawfully keeping liquors, held not to sustain a conviction. *O'Neil v. State* ..... 44
3. Evidence held to support findings denying mandamus to compel city council to revoke a liquor license, and to fix time for hearing remonstrance. *Middlekauff v. Adams*.... 265
4. Possession of real estate held insufficient to establish a freehold estate. *Swihart v. Hansen*..... 727
5. In a hearing on a remonstrance against granting a liquor license, a witness who testified that the petitioners told him they were freeholders, and that he examined a list of freeholders, held not qualified to testify who are freeholders of the village. *Swihart v. Hansen*..... 727
6. Upon contest of application for liquor license, the board is not bound by a stipulation involving unusual expense in reducing the evidence to writing, and mandamus will not lie to procure a transcript without payment of the extra expense of taking the evidence. *State v. Board of Fire & Police Commissioners* ..... 741
7. An appeal from the decision of the board in granting a liquor license is taken by giving notice of appeal, and procuring a transcript of the proceedings and filing it in the appellate court, and the court may compel the board to fur-

**Intoxicating Liquors—Concluded.**

- nish a transcript of the evidence. *State v. Board of Fire & Police Commissioners* ..... 741
8. One appealing from the board of fire and police commissioners of Omaha in a liquor license contest is entitled to a transcript of the proceedings, upon demand and the payment of reasonable fees therefor, but the board is not required to furnish a transcript without payment of the fees. *State v. Board of Fire & Police Commissioners* ..... 741

**Judgment.**

1. A minor suing on a cause of action will be bound by the decree the same as an adult if the suit was brought and prosecuted in good faith. *McCreary v. Creighton* ..... 179
2. Prior decree held a bar to a suit for accounting by executors and trustees. *McCreary v. Creighton* ..... 179
3. Decree in partition held conclusive, though the proceedings were irregular and the shares determined according to an unconstitutional statute. *Staats v. Wilson* ..... 204
4. One essential of a judgment in support of a plea in bar is that it was rendered in a suit involving the same subject matter. *Gering v. School District* ..... 219
5. Where a second action is on a different claim or demand, the judgment in the former operates as an estoppel only as to those matters in issue on the determination of which the judgment was rendered. *Gering v. School District* ..... 219
6. Where a judgment is pleaded in bar, if there be uncertainty as to the issues, the burden of proof is on the party relying on the estoppel to show that a question raised in the present suit was litigated and determined in the former. *Gering v. School District* ..... 219
7. A judgment is an estoppel only as to matters in issue and determined. *Mercer Co. v. City of Omaha* ..... 289
8. Where plaintiff appeals from the county to the district court, a dismissal there is not an affirmance of the judgment, which becomes a bar to a future action. *Thornhill v. Hargreaves* ..... 582
9. That an order of revivor does not expressly award execution does not invalidate it. *Thornhill v. Hargreaves* ..... 582
10. Proceedings to revive a judgment should not be had in the name of an administrator, unless he has succeeded to the rights of the decedent. *Vogt v. Binder* ..... 361

**Judicial Sales.**

1. One purchasing at judicial sale is estopped from questioning the validity of an incumbrance shown by the appraise-

**Judicial Sales—Concluded.**

- ment and deducted from the appraised value of the estate sold. *Topliff v. Richardson*..... 114  
 2. The district courts may set aside judicial sales for fraud or unfairness. *Strode v. Hoggland*..... 542

**Jury.**

1. Where the sheriff called as talesmen, pursuant to order of court, persons having the qualifications of jurors, who had been, before the order was made, requested by the sheriff to attend court for that purpose, held not ground for challenge. *Haddix v. State*..... 369  
 2. On trial for murder in the first degree, it is ground for challenge of a juror that he has such opinions as would preclude him from finding the accused guilty of an offense punishable with death. *Haddix v. State*..... 369

**Justice of the Peace.**

- Pending appeal from justice's court, the judgment creditor filed in the district court a transcript, and after dismissal of the appeal and remand caused execution to issue out of the district court. Held, That the execution was void. *Jenkins v. Campbell* ..... 138

**Landlord and Tenant.**

1. Ordinarily there is an implied covenant in a lease that the demised premises shall be open to entry by the lessee at the time fixed as the beginning of the term. *Herpolshemer v. Christopher*..... 355  
 2. The measure of damages for breach of implied covenant of entry is the difference between the rental value and the rent reserved, and any special damages. *Herpolshemer v. Christopher* ..... 355  
 3. Whether plaintiff rescinded contract of leasing and abandoned a claim for damages, held questions for the jury. *Herpolshemer v. Christopher* ..... 355

**Limitation of Actions. See TRUSTS, 2.**

1. Sec. 16 of the code is applicable only to civil actions. *Mercer Co. v. City of Omaha*..... 289  
 2. In an action on contract, the burden of proof of defense of limitations is on defendant. *Van Burg v. Van Engen*..... 816

**Lost Instruments.**

- Where the issue is as to whether a certificate of deposit was issued, and the verdict is for plaintiff who denied its existence, the court need not require indemnity against such instrument. *Emley v. Citizens State Bank*..... 794

**Mandamus.** See INTOXICATING LIQUORS, & WATER, 2.

1. Mandamus will not lie to compel the president *pro tempore* of a city council to preside and appoint its standing committees, where that duty is not enjoined by statute or ordinance. *State v. Dunn*..... 155
2. Evidence in proceeding to compel a railroad company to furnish cars on a side-track for grain shipments, held to sustain finding that the side-track was a public highway under sec. 4, art. XI of the constitution. *Roby v. State*... 450

**Marriage.**

1. In dealing with a marriage contract or the status resulting therefrom the state is always a party. *Willits v. Willits*.. 228
2. A marriage, where one of the parties is under age of consent but competent by the common law, is not void but voidable. *Willits v. Willits*..... 228
3. A court annuling a marriage at the suit of a husband who was under the age of consent when the marriage was solemnized may require him to pay a reasonable amount for the support of the issue of such marriage. *Willits v. Willits* .. 228
4. In such case the court may also require the husband to pay reasonable suit money and to reimburse the wife for expenditures for the family during the existence of the marriage relation. *Willits v. Willits*..... 228
5. Suit money may be allowed at any stage in the litigation and may be included in the final decree. *Willits v. Willits* .. 228

**Married Women.** See HUSBAND AND WIFE.**Master and Servant.**

1. The master is not liable for an injury to one employee by the tort of another outside of his employment, though the coemployees are not fellow servants. *Younkin v. Rochedford* ..... 528
2. A master is not responsible for the wrongful acts of his servant, when unauthorized and not within the servant's employment. *Younkin v. Rochedford* ..... 531
3. Evidence in a personal injury case held to justify directing verdict for defendant. *Hargadine v. Omaha B. & T. R. Co.*, 729
4. In an action for injury held that the trial court properly directed verdict for defendant. *Salisbury v. Press Publishing Co.* ..... 849
5. While an employer must use reasonable care to provide safe appliances, this does not relieve the employee if he puts

**Master and Servant—Concluded.**

- them to a use for which they are not designed or subjects them to a strain beyond their capacity. *Salisbury v. Press Publishing Co.* ..... 349

**Mechanics' Liens.**

1. A mechanic's lien takes precedence over a mortgage subsequently executed. *Hahn v. Bonacum* ..... 837
2. Evidence held to show substantial performance of contract. *Hahn v. Bonacum* ..... 837
3. Evidence as between owner and lien-holder held to justify finding for a greater sum than found by the trial court. *Hahn v. Bonacum* ..... 837
4. In a suit to foreclose a mechanic's lien, relief will not be denied where there has been substantial performance of the contract. *Hahn v. Bonacum* ..... 837

**Mortgages. See ASSISTANCE, WRIT OF. MECHANICS' LIENS, 1. RECEIVERS.**

1. Evidence held to show that a mortgagee was agent of its assignee, and payments to it satisfied the mortgage debt. *Pine v. Mangus* ..... 83
2. A mortgage to a trustee may be foreclosed without joining the beneficiary. *Abrams v. Taintor* ..... 109
3. A mortgagor's possession of mortgaged premises after foreclosure and sale will not become adverse until notice that he is holding adversely to purchaser. *Abrams v. Taintor* ..... 109
4. Prior to 1903 a surety on a waste bond given in a foreclosure proceeding was not liable for taxes pending appeal. *United States F. & G. Co. v. Rieck* ..... 300

**Municipal Corporations. See MANDAMUS, 1.**

1. Evidence held to sustain finding that loss by flood was not occasioned by the act of God. *City of McCook v. McAdams*, 1
2. Evidence held insufficient to submit question of contributory negligence to the jury. *City of McCook v. McAdams* ..... 1
3. Instruction covering defendant's theory that loss by flood was occasioned by the act of God, held favorable as the law would warrant. *City of McCook v. McAdams* ..... 1
4. Instruction as to burden of proof held not erroneous. *City of McCook v. McAdams* ..... 1
5. In an action against a city for damages caused by defective drainage, where the defense is that the loss was occasioned by the act of God, held error to instruct that the burden is on defendant to establish such defense. *City of McCook v. McAdams* ..... 7

**Municipal Corporations—Concluded.**

6. In an action against a city for damages occasioned by defective drainage, instruction as to burden of proof held proper. *City of McCook v. McCadams*..... 11
7. City councils have power to adopt rules for their own government in matters of procedure. *State v. Dunn*..... 155
8. Where a city receives and retains substantial benefits under a contract which it was authorized to make, but which was void because irregularly executed, it is liable in an action to recover the reasonable value of the benefits. *Rogers v. City of Omaha* ..... 187
9. Cities of the second class may vote bonds to the amount of 5 per cent. of the assessed valuation to establish a heating or lighting system, under secs. 1-5, art. V, ch. 14a, Comp. St. 1903, or 2½ per cent. under ch. 33, laws 1905. *State v. Searle* ..... 272
10. Bonds of a city of the second class, designated electric light bonds, to the amount of 5 per cent. of the assessed valuation, issued under ch. 26, laws 1903, held valid and entitled to registration. *State v. Searle* ..... 272
11. Omaha charter (Comp. St. 1897, ch. 12a, sec. 192), held to contain authority for levy of special assessment which failed for irregularity in procedure. *Mercer Co. v. City of Omaha* ..... 289
12. In an act incorporating a certain class of cities, it is competent to enact that the treasurer of the county in which the only city of that class is situated shall be *ex officio* treasurer of the city. *Cathers v. Hennings*..... 295
13. Notice to nonresidents to construct sidewalks held sufficient to authorize a special assessment to pay the cost thereof. *State v. Several Parcels of Land*..... 320
14. Publication of notice to nonresident property owners to construct sidewalks may be proved otherwise than by affidavit under an ordinance. *State v. Several Parcels of Land*.... 320
15. Under its charter the city council of Omaha may provide for calling a special election to vote on a proposition to issue bonds. *Linn v. City of Omaha*..... 552
16. The power to issue bonds to construct buildings, conferred by sec. 195 of the Omaha charter, carries with it authority to provide sites for such buildings. *Linn v. City of Omaha*, 552
17. Where a city in erecting public works exercises reasonable care and adopts plans approved by skilled engineers, it is not liable for defects in the plans, unless the construction is so dangerous that all reasonable minds must agree that it was unsafe. *Watters v. City of Omaha*..... 855

**Negligence.**

- Where reasonable men may fairly differ on the question of negligence, its determination is for the jury. *McCarty v. Lincoln Traction Co.* ..... 819

**New Trial.**

- Mere indiscretion of a juror held insufficient to avoid a verdict.  
*Wessel v. Bishop* ..... 74

**Notaries.**

1. In taking depositions notaries do not exercise judicial functions. *In re Butler* ..... 267
2. Where a witness fails to attend before a notary in obedience to a subpoena, he may be punished as for a contempt, but such punishment cannot exceed a fine of \$50. *In re Butler*, 267

**Officers.** See **INJUNCTION**, 2, 3.**Parties.**

- A bailee of property may sue to recover the value thereof against one through whose negligence it is lost. *Union P. R. Co. v. Meyer* ..... 549

**Payment.**

1. Rulings on objections to instructions as to proof of payments in an action for attorney's fees, held without error.  
*Wessel v. Bishop* ..... 74
2. Evidence held insufficient to sustain a finding of payment.  
*Parker v. Leech* ..... 135

**Pleading.** See **RAILROADS**, 6.

1. Amended cross-petition held not a departure, and sufficient to support a decree for specific performance. *Jordan v. Jackson* ..... 15
2. In an action on an appeal bond the petition is not open to demurrer because it does not show a judgment which could be paid, where it shows the breach of another condition. *Locke v. Skow* ..... 39
3. A petition setting up numerous and continued trespasses to personal property states but one cause of action. *Habig v. Parker* ..... 102
4. Where a plea in abatement was stricken and defendants incorporated the same matter in the answer and litigated it, held that they were not prejudiced by the ruling on the motion to strike. *Simmons v. Kelsey* ..... 124
5. Where one proceeds to trial on the theory that the petition tenders a certain issue, if the pleadings can be construed to raise such issue they will be held to do so. *Perkins v. Missouri P. R. Co.* ..... 242

**Pleading—Concluded.**

6. Objection to petition in alleging plaintiff's capacity to sue can be raised by demurrer. *Meyer v. Omaha F. & C. Co.*.... 405
7. Petition in an action on contract held not demurrable. *Harris v. Paine* ..... 523
8. A variance in the time of alleged damage by fire between petitions in the county and district courts, held immaterial. *Union P. R. Co. v. Murphy*..... 545
9. Refusal to strike from a reply matter embraced in the petition and answer held not prejudicial. *Emley v. Citizens State Bank* ..... 794

**Principal and Agent.** See **MORTGAGES**, 1.

1. An agent authorized to receive payment has no authority to commute his principal's debt for a debt due from himself to his principal's debtor, nor to receive payment other than in money. *Parker v. Leech* ..... 135
2. The declarations of an alleged agent are not admissible to establish or enlarge his authority. *Fitzgerald v. Kimball Bros. Co.*..... 236
3. The authority of an agent to execute a contract cannot be established by evidence of his declarations as to a conversation between him and his alleged principal by telephone. *Fitzgerald v. Kimball Bros. Co.*..... 236
4. Knowledge by the principal of the material facts is an essential element of an effective ratification of an unauthorized act of his agent. *Fitzgerald v. Kimball Bros. Co.*..... 236
5. Evidence held insufficient to sustain finding that an alleged agent had authority to bind the principal. *Fitzgerald v. Kimball Bros. Co.* ..... 236
6. A principal who ratifies a contract of his agent is thereafter estopped from denying the authority of the agent to enter into the contract. *Lutjeharms v. Smith*..... 260
7. The authority of an agent may be shown by letters of his principal. *Peycke v. Shinn*..... 364
8. In an action between a principal and an adverse party, the agent is presumed to have communicated to his principal facts coming to his knowledge affecting his agency. *Pringle v. Modern Woodmen*..... 384
9. The doctrine of ostensible authority of an agent can be invoked only by such as have dealt with him on the faith of such authority. *Fike v. Ott*..... 439

**Principal and Surety.** See **MORTGAGES**, 4.

1. In the absence of fraud or mistake, a surety upon a supersedeas bond can be held only for consequences of the pro-

**Principal and Surety—Concluded.**

- ceeding in which the instrument was given. *American Bonding Co. v. Heye* ..... 511
2. Where a creditor to whom two persons are obligated releases one he discharges the other, though the person released is surety only, if he is ultimately liable to the party not discharged. *Brown v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.* ..... 767

**Process.**

1. Service by publication on three defendants, two of whom were residents and the third deceased, held void. *Topliff v. Richardson* ..... 314
2. Where plaintiff is given leave to amend a defective affidavit for service by publication and return of service of summons, but fails so to do, he will be deemed to have elected to stand on the original affidavit and return. *Goldie v. Stewart* ..... 168

**Public Lands.**

1. Under sec. 4, art. IV, ch. 80, Comp. St. 1857, persons who complied with the act had a preference right of purchase or lease of land known as indemnity school land, and had title to the improvements made by them thereon. *State v. McCright* ..... 732
2. Occupants of indemnity school lands who had complied with the act of 1875 (laws 1875, p. 123) were entitled to have the land appraised separately from the improvements, and to be given an opportunity to lease the land upon such appraisement before being ejected therefrom. *State v. McCright* ..... 732
3. One who has attempted to make entry under the homestead laws of the United States, and has contested the right of the state to indemnity school lands, is not estopped to assert his right under the act of 1875 (laws 1875, p. 123) relating to the improvements of actual settlers upon lands so obtained by the state. *State v. McCright* ..... 732

**Railroads. See CONTRACTS, 11.**

1. Under sec. 110, ch. 78, Comp. St., it is the duty of a railroad company to make and keep in repair suitable crossings with approaches, but the county is required to build that part of a highway within the right of way which it would have been required to make had the railroad not been constructed. *Missouri P. R. Co. v. Cass County* ..... 396
2. Under sec. 110, ch. 78, Comp. St., a railroad company cannot recover damages from a county for the cost of putting in cattle guards, erecting sign-posts, building wing-fences, planking the track, and constructing approaches at crossings. *Missouri P. R. Co. v. Cass County* ..... 396

**Railroads—Concluded.**

3. A side-track, though used exclusively by a milling company, held a public highway within sec. 4, art. XI of the constitution. *Roby v. State* ..... 450
4. The term railroad includes all side-tracks necessary or convenient for the transaction of the company's business. *Roby v. State* ..... 450
5. Sec. 1, art. I, ch. 72, Comp. St., was not intended to provide a penalty for failure to maintain fences, but merely to render companies liable to owners of stock injured in consequence of such failure. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. King*.... 591
6. A petition for damages for loss of stock under sec. 1, art. I, ch. 72, Comp. St., which contains no allegation tracing such loss to failure to maintain fences, is fatally defective. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. King*..... 591
7. In an action for negligently setting out a fire, the origin of the fire may be proved by circumstantial evidence. *Kearney County v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*..... 861
8. Evidence in an action for setting fire to a bridge held to sustain verdict for plaintiff. *Kearney County v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*..... 861
9. Evidence in an action for damages to trees by fire from a locomotive, held to support verdict for plaintiffs. *Union P. R. Co. v. Murphy*..... 545
10. Evidence in an action for damages for killing stock held to sustain verdict. *Union P. R. Co. v. Meyer*..... 549

**Rape.** See CRIMINAL LAW, 1.

1. In a prosecution for rape, the testimony of the prosecutrix, if denied, must be corroborated. *Klawitter v. State*..... 49
2. Evidence held insufficient to sustain conviction of rape. *Klawitter v. State* ..... 49
3. The uncorroborated evidence of the prosecutrix is insufficient to sustain a conviction of rape. *Livinghouse v. State*, 491
4. Where the testimony of the prosecutrix lacks probability, and the corroborating evidence is of a doubtful character, conviction of rape will be set aside. *Livinghouse v. State*, 491

**Real Estate Agents.** See BROKERS.**Receivers.**

1. In an action for damages for the wrongful appointment of a receiver, the rental value of the property sequestered and attorney's fees are elements of damages. *Joslin v. Williams* ..... 594
2. The approval of the accounts of a receiver wrongfully appointed does not adjudicate the question of damages between

**Receivers—Concluded.**

- the litigants, where the party resisting such appointment does not participate in the accounting. *Joslin v. Williams*, 594
3. That the supreme court in vacating an order appointing a receiver puts its decision on a ground different from the one urged does not deprive the party procuring the vacation of the right to recover for services of his attorney in procuring the vacation. *Joslin v. Williams*..... 594
  4. The value of a mortgagor's homestead pending foreclosure cannot be diminished by the costs of a receivership or unnecessary repairs, where the receiver ought not to have been appointed. *Joslin v. Williams* ..... 602
  5. In an action on the bond of a receiver in foreclosure of a homestead, defendants cannot recover costs of the foreclosure for which the owner of the homestead was not personally liable. *Joslin v. Williams*..... 602

**Replevin.**

- In a replevin suit, where plaintiff has taken the property, it is error to permit a stranger to be substituted for the original plaintiff. *Meyer v. Omaha F. & C. Co.*..... 405

**Revivor.** See JUDGMENT, 9, 10.

- Error in reviving a suit held without prejudice where deceased was not a necessary party. *Abrams v. Taintor*..... 109

**Sales.**

1. Where a seller by fraud induces one to accept something not contemplated by his contract, he may rescind the sale and recover what he has paid. *Jakway v. Proudfit*..... 67
2. Where a purchaser receives what he actually purchased, and bases his right to rescind on some false representation, he must show that such representation was material and that he was damaged. *Jakway v. Proudfit*..... 67
3. Any form of words to induce a sale, that the subject matter of the sale is of a particular quality or fitness, constitutes a warranty. *Shuman v. Heater*..... 119
4. Evidence held sufficient to show a warranty and breach thereof. *Shuman v. Heater*..... 119
5. Evidence in an action for breach of contract of sale held to sustain a finding that the commodity which plaintiff was willing to deliver answered the requirements of the contract. *Parkins v. Missouri P. R. Co.*..... 242
6. In an action for breach of contract of sale, the burden of proof that the goods tendered met the requirements of the contract is on plaintiff. *Parkins v. Missouri P. R. Co.*...., 242

**Sales—Concluded.**

7. Where goods tendered do not meet requirements of contract, the vendee may refuse to accept them. *Parkins v. Missouri P. R. Co.* ..... 242
8. In an action for breach of contract of sale, where the vendor procures the goods from third parties, the measure of damages is the difference between the cost at the time and place specified and the contract price, with interest. *Parkins v. Missouri P. R. Co.* ..... 242
9. Contract held entire in the sense that either party had the right to a full performance. *Peycke v. Shinn* ..... 364
10. Before a seller can maintain an action for the price of a chattel, there must be such a delivery as will pass the title. *Murphy Co. v. Exchange Nat. Bank* ..... 573
11. Where possession and title to chattels remain in the seller, and the purchaser renounces his contract, the seller can only sue for damages sustained. *Murphy Co. v. Exchange Nat. Bank* ..... 573
12. Instructions in an action for goods sold, held proper. *Lawrie v. Lininger & Metcalf Co.* ..... 165

**Schools and School Districts. See INJUNCTION, 3.**

1. Under sec. 2, subd. 14, ch. 78, laws 1881, as amended by sec. 6, ch. 62, laws 1899, state officers living in Lincoln may send their children to the public schools without paying tuition, though they retain their legal residence elsewhere. *State v. Selleck* ..... 747
2. If a family, or one having legal custody of children, live in a school district other than the district of their legal residence, not to obtain school privileges, but from other motives, the children are entitled to free school privileges in the former district. *State v. Selleck* ..... 747

**Specific Performance.**

1. In a suit for specific performance, held that an account of rents and profits should be taken. *Jordan v. Jackson* ..... 26
2. Specific performance will not be awarded, where the evidence discloses gross laches and time is of the essence of the contract. *Bradley & Co. v. Union P. R. Co.* ..... 172
3. Where the vendee is willing to accept the title of the vendor, the courts will not refuse to compel specific performance because of defective title. *Lutjeharms v. Smith* ..... 260
4. A proceeding to enforce an alleged oral contract to adopt a child and to make a bequest to him, is in substance a suit for specific performance, cognizable only in equity. *Peterson v. Estate of Bauer* ..... 652

**Specific Performance—Concluded.**

5. A written contract of adoption binding the foster-parents to make the child an equal heir may be specifically enforced against the estate of the foster-parents. *Pemberton v. Heirs of Pemberton* ..... 669

**Statute of Frauds.**

1. An oral contract, on sufficient consideration, to divide the profits of a purchase and sale of land is not within the statute of frauds. *Rice v. Parrott* ..... 501, 505
2. Part performance by the vendor, including surrender of possession, and full performance by the vendee, removes a parol agreement for the sale of land from the statute of frauds, and the vendee in possession may sue to quiet title. *Morrison v. Gosnell* ..... 539

**Statutes. See DRUNKARDS, 2.**

1. It is competent to embrace in one act every detail of legislation having direct reference to the subject expressed in the title. *Cathers v. Hennings* ..... 295
2. The provisions of sec. 24 of the code providing for actions by or against a firm must be strictly followed. *Meyer v. Omaha F. & C. Co.* ..... 405
3. The provisions of a penal statute will not be extended by construction so as to apply to persons not clearly within its terms. *State v. Dailey* ..... 770
4. Statutes *in pari materia* should be construed together and harmonized, if possible. *State v. Dunn* ..... 155

**Taxation.**

1. The action of the county board of equalization in fixing the place for listing and assessment of personalty under sec. 42, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St., will not be disturbed, unless abuse of discretion is shown. *Diemer & Guillois v. Grant County* .. 73
2. On appeal from a county board of equalization for over valuation, the sole question is, what was the actual value of the property in the market in the ordinary course of trade? *Lancaster County v. Brown* ..... 286
3. Where the county board acts in good faith in designating newspapers in which to publish a delinquent tax list under sec. 196, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St., the courts will not restrain its action. *Gettschmann v. County Commissioners* .. 648
4. The statute affords a plain, adequate and speedy remedy to one whose property has been excessively valued for taxation and in cases of errors or irregularities, and equity will not interfere. *Western Union T. Co. v. Douglas County* ..... 666
5. A commercial college is a school under sec. 13, art. I, ch.

**Taxation—Concluded.**

- 77, Comp. St., providing for exemptions. *Rohrbough v. Douglas County* ..... 679
6. In assessing property for taxation, used partly for school purposes, the value of the part used exclusively for school purposes should be deducted from the total value of the property. *Rohrbough v. Douglas County* ..... 679
7. Where the assessor's valuation of property of a precinct is relatively too low, it may be raised by the board of equalization without notice. *Lancaster County v. Whedon* ..... 753
8. The statute requires no formal finding by a board of equalization as a basis for equalizing assessments between precincts. *Lancaster County v. Whedon* ..... 753
9. On appeal from the board of equalization in the matter of an assessment, the burden is on appellant to show error. *Lancaster County v. Whedon* ..... 753
10. Opinion of witness without stating facts, held insufficient to overthrow the judgment of the board of equalization. *Lancaster County v. Whedon* ..... 753
11. The purchaser at a tax sale takes free from any incumbrances or equities connected with the prior title. *Topliff v. Richardson* ..... 114
12. To invalidate a claim under a tax sale, one must show all valid taxes paid, either by himself or the party through whom he claims. *Thomas v. Farmers L. & T. Co.* ..... 568
13. Appeal does not lie from an order of a county board in making the tax levy provided for by sec. 136, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. *Whedon v. Lancaster County* ..... 761

**Tender.**

1. Where no place is specified for a tender, the law will presume that it be made at the place of the contract; but an unconditional refusal to accept a tender waives the necessity therefor. *Hefner v. Robert* ..... 192
2. Where a tender other than money is made, the tenderer must, if possible, keep the property in condition to make the tender good while an action for rescission is pending. *Hefner v. Robert* ..... 192
3. Certain acts held to amount to a withdrawal of a tender. *Hefner v. Robert* ..... 192

**Trespass.** See INJUNCTION, 1.**Trial.**

1. Instructions should be read in open court, and where the jury desire further instructions they should be brought into court, and if sent to the jury room the record should show the consent of the parties. *Martin v. Martin* ..... 335

**Trial—Concluded.**

2. In an action for injury on a railroad track, *held*, that the court erred in withdrawing the questions of negligence and of contributory negligence from the jury and directing a verdict for defendant. *Hicks v. Union P. R. Co.*..... 496
3. It is not error to omit to submit evidence in support of a cause of action not embraced within the issues. *Andresen v. Jetter* ..... 520
4. Evidence in an action for damages for assault, *held* to justify an instruction to return a verdict for defendants. *Andresen v. Jetter* ..... 520
5. Where an instruction is not founded on evidence, and is misleading, the judgment must be reversed. *Mannion v. Talboy* ..... 570
6. A party is entitled to have the jury instructed as to his theory of the case, when it is supported by competent evidence. *Hauber v. Leibold*..... 706
7. Instructions unsupported by evidence are erroneous. *Nichols & Shepard Co. v. Miller*..... 809
8. The statute requiring instructions to be in writing has no application to a directed verdict. *Salisbury v. Press Publishing Co.* ..... 849
9. If a juror has failed to hear a witness, he should be required to repeat his evidence. *Haddix v. State* ..... 369
10. The prosecution of a suit to enforce an oral contract to adopt a child and make a bequest to him, is an appeal to the conscience of the judge, who should admit in evidence every matter tending to enlighten him as to the situation and circumstances of the parties. *Peterson v. Estate of Bauer.*.. 652

**Trover.**

1. Petition *held* good as against a general demurrer. *Fike v. Ott* ..... 439
2. Evidence *held* to sustain verdict. *Fike v. Ott*..... 439

**Trusts.**

1. Where different persons convey their property in trust to secure the same debt, it is not a misjoinder of causes of action to unite them as parties in one action to enforce the trust. *Michigan Trust Co. v. City of Red Cloud*..... 634
2. A debtor in an action instituted in his own behalf cannot invoke the statute of limitations, in an action to relieve his property from a trust relation, in the absence of fraud, unless the trust has been executed. *Michigan Trust Co. v. City of Red Cloud* ..... 634
3. The district courts have jurisdiction in cases involving

**Trusts—Concluded.**

- ownership of property held in trust, though claimed by an administrator. *Adams v. Dennis* ..... 682  
4. Where a trust is created, neither the trustee nor the beneficiary has power to mortgage the trust estate, unless expressly conferred in the instrument creating the trust. *Byron Reed Co. v. Klabunde*..... 801

**Vendor and Purchaser. See EJECTMENT.**

- A purchaser by quitclaim takes subject to equities. *Byron Reed Co. v. Klabunde* ..... 801

**Venue. See CORPORATIONS, 5, 6.****Waters.**

1. In the absence of negligent construction of its roadbed across a natural watercourse, a railroad company is not liable for injury to crops by reason of an unprecedented flood. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Buel*..... 420  
2. Where water is diverted from its natural channel by means of a canal constructed to supply power for a mill, mandamus will lie to compel the mill owner to erect bridges wherever the canal crosses a public road. *Nuckolls County v. Guthrie & Co.* ..... 464

**Wills.**

1. A decedent's estate is chargeable with attorney's fees for services rendered in defending the will. *St. James Orphan Asylum v. McDonald* ..... 625  
2. A decedent's estate is not ordinarily liable to an attorney for services rendered for and at the request of a legatee under a will in a contest thereof. *St. James Orphan Asylum v. McDonald* ..... 630  
3. An alleged oral contract to adopt a child and to make a testamentary bequest to him, or to make him an heir, must be established by clear and satisfactory evidence. *Peterson v. Estate of Bauer*..... 652  
4. The county court has original jurisdiction in the probate of a will, and its decree is conclusive unless reversed by a direct proceeding. *Byron Reed Co. v. Klabunde*..... 801  
5. Where a testator, being unable to write, requested the draftsman of his will, in the presence of two witnesses, to sign his name, held to authorize the draftsman to sign it. *Isaac v. Halderman* ..... 823  
6. Evidence held insufficient to show either mental incapacity, or undue influence. *Isaac v. Halderman* ..... 823  
7. In a suit to set aside the probate of a will on account of

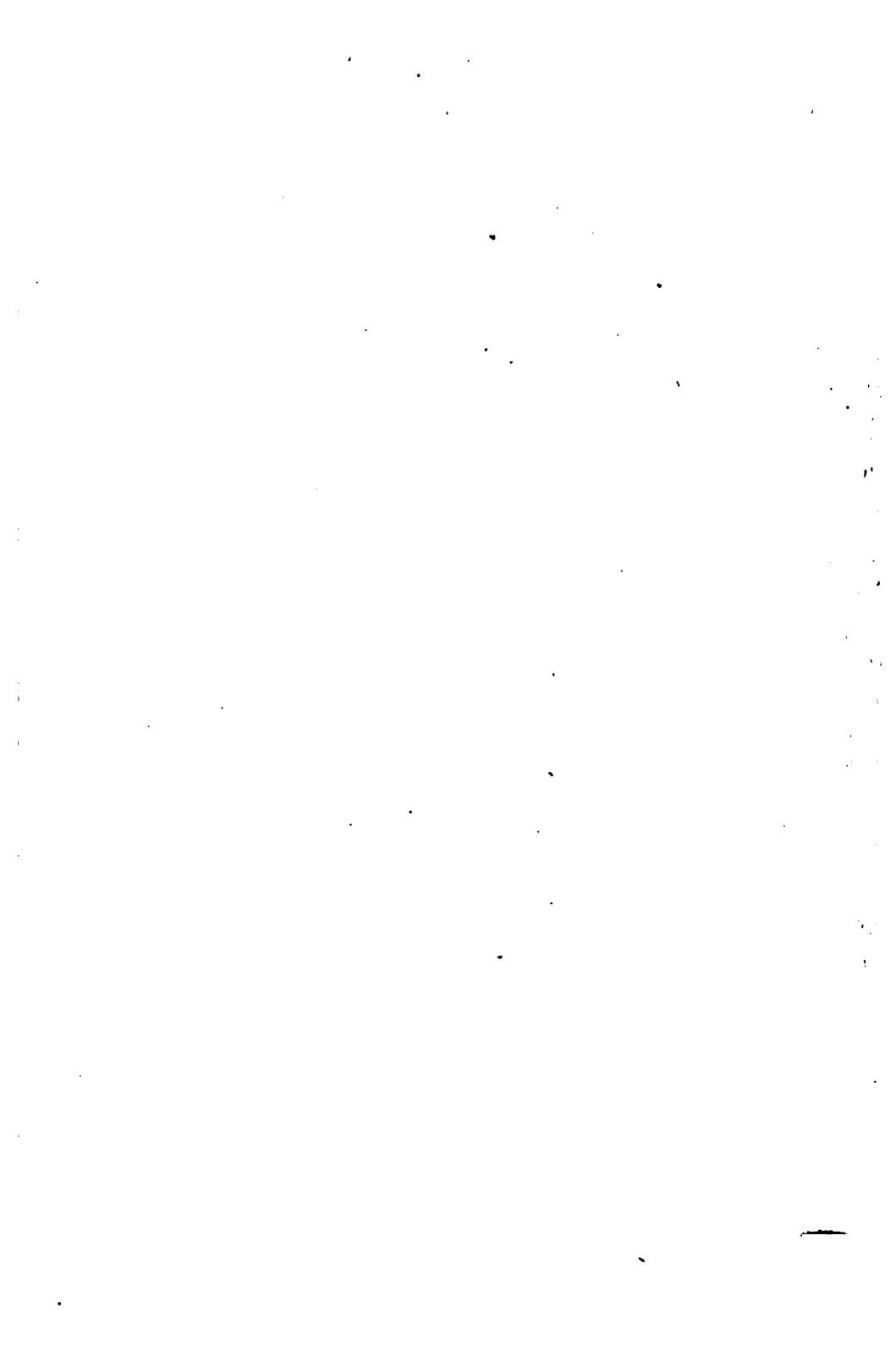
**Wills—Concluded.**

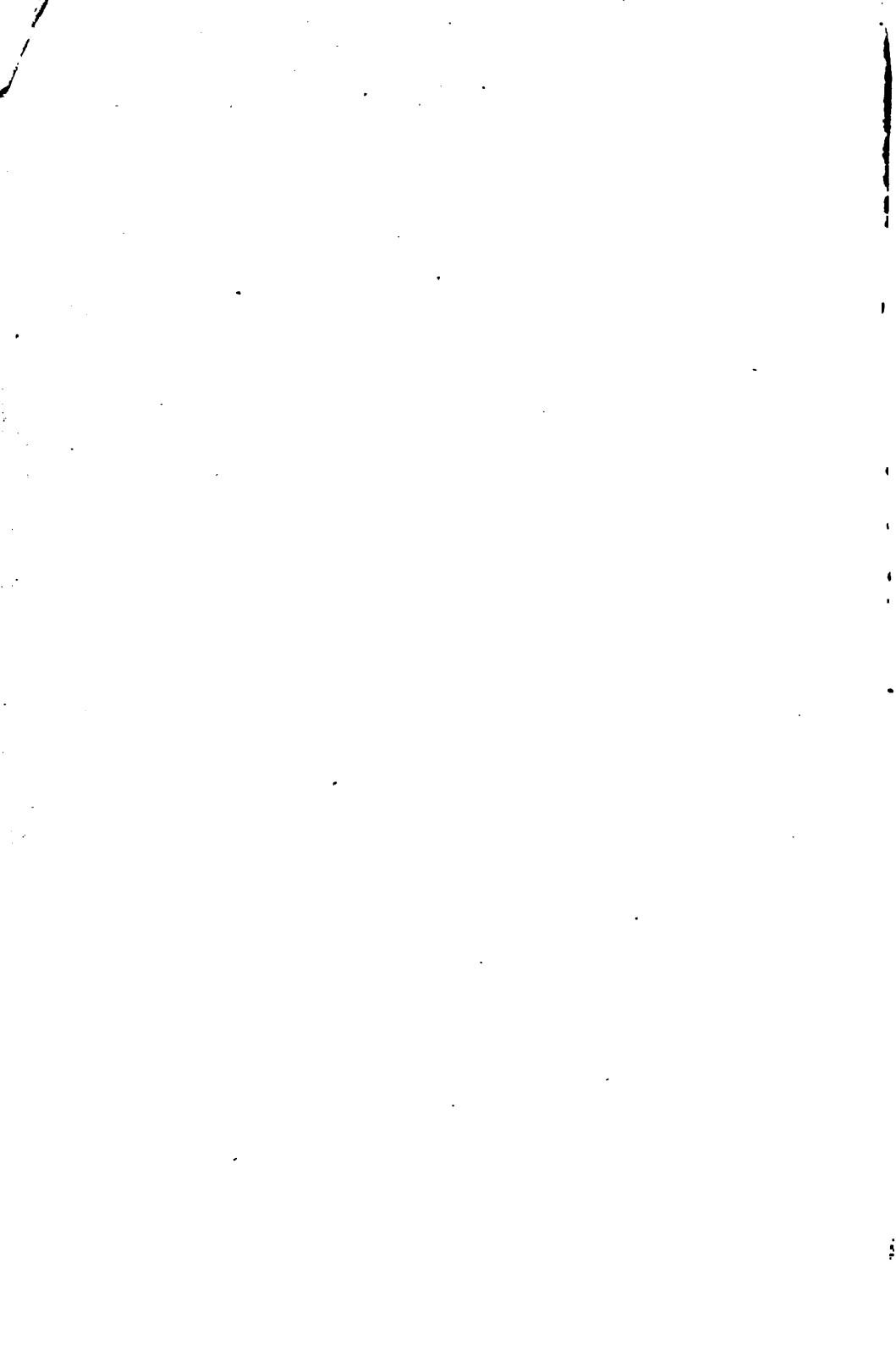
- fraud, the burden of proof rests on the applicant to show  
fraud prejudicial to the applicant. *Willms v. Plambeck*.... 195
8. Evidence held insufficient to support petition. *Willms v. Plambeck* ..... 195

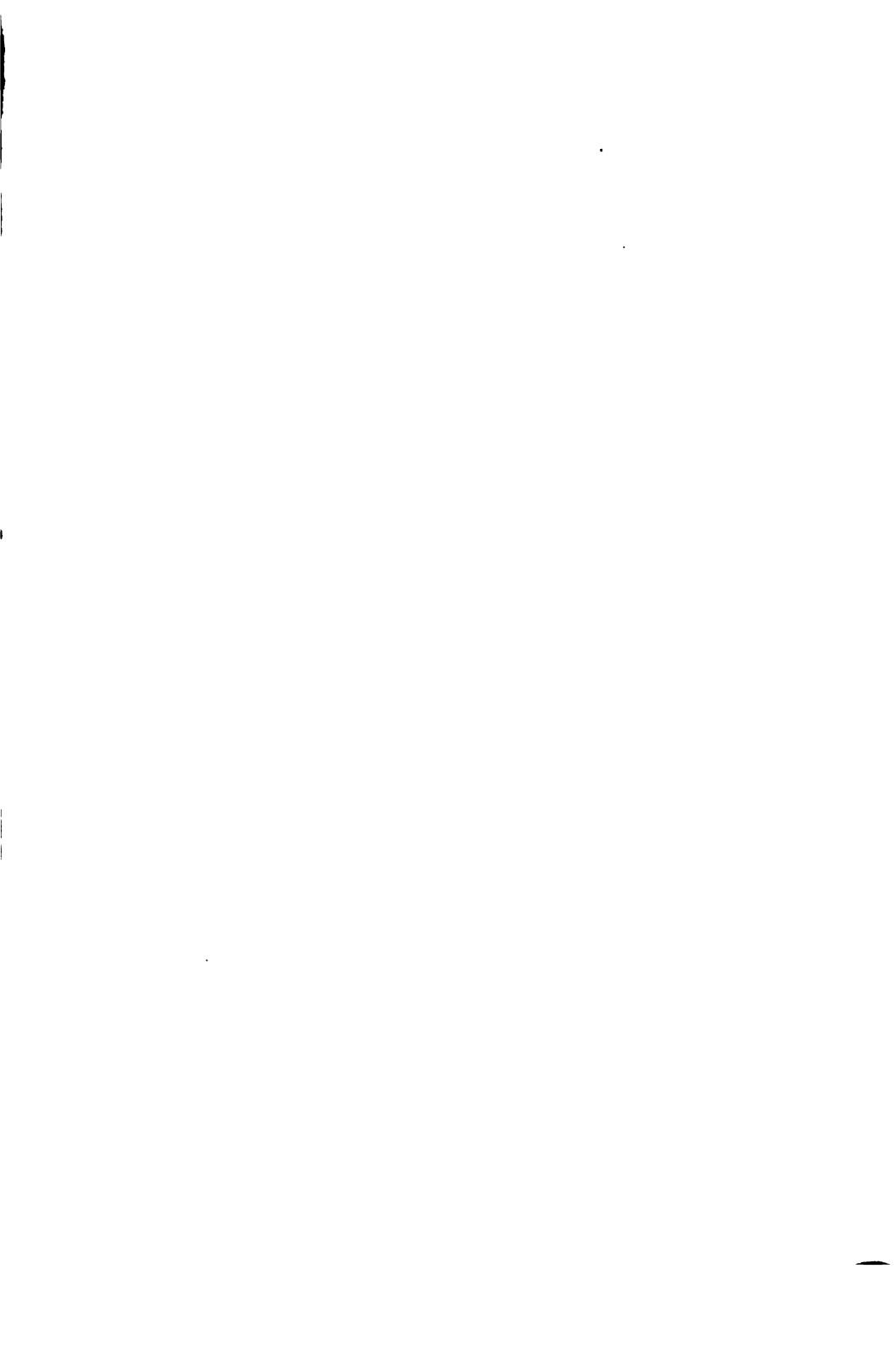
**Witnesses.**

1. Where accused testifies in his own behalf, he may be impeached as any other witness. *Haddix v. State* ..... 369
2. One who has a direct legal interest as one of several joint heirs in an action against a representative of a decedent, held not incompetent to testify to transactions between deceased and an adverse party in whose demand the witness has no interest. *Hageman v. Estate of Powell*..... 514
3. An administrator's wife held competent to testify, in an action between him and his successor, to any transaction or conversation had with deceased. *Foster v. Murphy*..... 576
4. A husband is a competent witness for his wife in a suit to establish ownership to property claimed by her and held in trust by the administrator of his mother's estate. *Adams v. Dennis* ..... 682
5. Cross-examination should be confined to the subject matter of the examination in chief. *Emley v. Citizens State Bank*, 794

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